

A A MANAVALAN

EPIC
HEROISM
IN
MILTON
AND
KAMBAN

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EPIC HEROISM
in
MILTON and KAMBAN

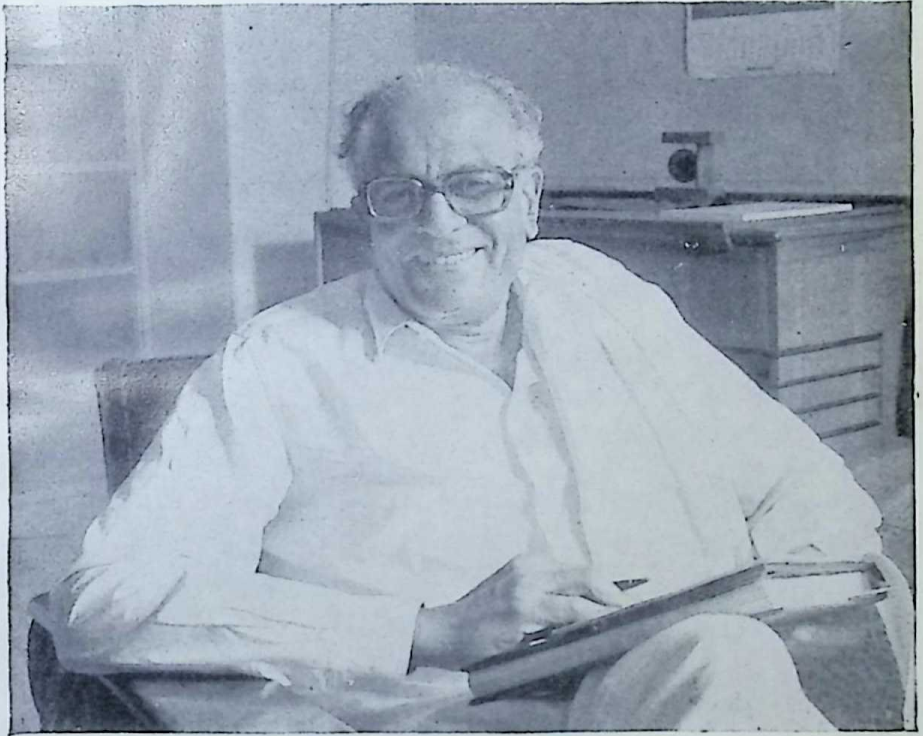
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A A Manavalan
Reader
Department of Tamil Language
University of Madras 600 005

KAMBAN TRUST
"RASAKONDALU"
CIRCUIT HOUSE ROAD
COIMBATORE 641 018

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Thiru G. K. SUNDARAM
Patron of Letters and Labour

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Literary Criticism in Tamil as an art is a 20th Century phenomenon. May be, it is the product of our familiarity with the English language. Comparative study of works in the same language or in different languages is a part of that art.

Such works are rare in Tamil; only a few have appeared. One such is Dr. A.A. Manavalan's doctoral thesis in English: "Epic Heroism in Milton and Kamban." Of course, there is already in the field a good study, the "Epic Muse - The Ramayana and The Paradise Lost" (also a doctoral thesis) by Dr. S. Ramakrishnan. Dr. Ramakrishnan's thesis is "valuable for its wide perspectives" according to Dr. T. P. M. Dr. Manavalan on the other hand, focusses his inquiry on the theme of epic heroism and traces the stages of its evolution from Homer onwards on the European side and from Ilango Adigal on the Tamil side, resulting in his categorization of the same into Martial heroism, Intellectual heroism and Moral and Spiritual heroism. He takes the reader deep into the study of this thematic aspect of the works of these two all-time greats which, no doubt, will be a rewarding exercise.

We congratulate Dr. Manavalan on the excellent work he has produced through his doctoral study and thank him for letting us publish it in book form with a view to placing it in the hands of the literate as well as the laity among Kamban enthusiasts.

We have now a legion of Kamban enthusiasts and scholars thanks to the indefatigable efforts taken by the late revered Kamban Adipodi, Saw. Ganesan in spreading the message of Kamban through his Kamban Festivals. To them this book will be a most welcome friend. This book is the maiden publication of the Kamban Trust, Coimbatore.

"Rasakondalu"
15th August 1983

G. K. SUNDARAM
Managing Trustee
Kamban Trust, Coimbatore

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Cil</i>	Cilappathikāram
<i>Comedy</i>	Divine Comedy
<i>JC</i>	Jeevakacinthāmani
<i>Jerusalem</i>	Jerusalem Delivered
<i>KR</i>	Kambarāmāyanam
<i>MM</i>	Manimēkalai
<i>PL</i>	Paradise Lost
<i>PR</i>	Paradise Regained
<i>Queene</i>	Faerie Queene
<i>SA</i>	Samson Agonistes

SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION*

அ	ஆ	இ	ஈ	உ	ஊ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū
எ	ஏ	ஐ	ஒ	ஓ	ஔ
e	ē	ai	o	ō	au
க	ங்	ச	ஞ்	ட்	ண்
k	ṅ	c	ñ	ṭ	ṇ
த்	ந்	ப்	ம்	ய்	ர்
t	n	p	m	y	r
ல்	வ்	ழ்	ள்	ற்	ண்
l	v	ḷ	ḷ	ṟ	ṇ

* This scheme of transliteration is chiefly followed in relation to the titles of the works in Tamil referred to in the Notes and the Bibliography. Diacritical marks sparingly used in the body of the book are confined to the vowels alone. In other cases including wellknown names conventional spelling is followed.

PREFACE

Justice M.M. ISMAIL

Former Chief Justice

Madras High Court

In the past, whenever I was told that some scholar was venturing on a comparative study of a European literature, particularly an epic, with an Indian, particularly a Tamil epic, my immediate reaction was one of complete cynicism or extreme scepticism. The justification for such a reaction was the conviction that a literature of a country or in a language derives its plot, substance, sustenance and scope from the tradition, culture, beliefs, ethos, and milieu peculiar to that country or that language and that therefore there can be very little in common to give rise to a comparative study. This conviction, however, did not exclude the possibility of a unique commonness in matters concerning the concept of divinity, religion or spirituality since with reference to these matters the truths, perceived, experienced and affirmed by great souls living in any time or clime have a universal existence not liable to vast variations or substantial differentiations. Hence I thought that the eternal verities expressed and enunciated by sages and saints have a universal language of their own speaking to and illuminating the minds and spirits of every one irrespective of the country he inhabits, the language he speaks, the religion to which he owes allegiance and the time he lives in, but the same will not be relevant to literatures and epics, sung or written by poets in different languages, in different countries and in different times, though, here again, if the author possesses a universal vision, an immortal ideal and unconquerable moral courage, his writings can acquire the characteristics earlier indicated.

However, Dr. S. Ramakrishnan's work in Tamil, comparing Kamban and Milton, was the first eye-opener to me showing that there is great scope for comparing Kamban's Ramayana with Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in relation to several features. His later

doctoral dissertation, with greater elaboration and refinement, the "Epic Muse-Ramayana and Paradise Lost" in English, sharpened and widened the earlier awakening.

Now comes Dr. A. A. Manavalan's book, originally a doctoral dissertation, comparing Kamban and Milton. The scope of the work of Dr. Manavalan is at once narrower and broader than that of Ramakrishnan; narrower in as much as Dr. Manavalan has limited the scope of his study to the concept of heroism as delineated by Kamban and Milton; and wider in as much as the comparison is not restricted to Kamban's Ramayana with Milton's *Paradise Lost* alone but, with regard to Milton, it covers his other poems also namely, *Paradise Regained*, *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes*, besides a thematic analysis of the European and the Tamil epics indicating their respective heroic traditions before Milton and Kamban.

Dr. Manavalan broadly categorises Heroism, as Martial heroism in which characteristics such as physical fortitude, pride, disobedience, inordinate passions, uxoriousness and self-love play the decisive part; Intellectual heroism, with reference to which aspects such as vain wisdom, deceitfulness, and rhetoric enter into calculation and Moral and Spiritual heroism, which inevitably involves considerations such as moral and spiritual valour, true wisdom, humility and obedience, faith, resistance to temptations, patience, repentance, chastity and charity.

Though briefly but lucidly, Dr. Manavalan traces the evolving concept of heroism in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Camoens' *Os Lusíadas*, Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* and Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and points out that when Milton came on the scene, the concept of moral and spiritual heroism had already acquired supremacy over the other two and therefore it was logical and natural for him to glorify that heroism and that the thematic treatment of his epics most appropriately converged in the delineation of this heroism. Similarly Dr. Manavalan briefly touches upon the concept of heroism in *Cilappathikāram*, *Manimēkalai*, and *Jeevakachīnthāmani*, and points out that the tradition of Tamil epics had always been to glorify moral and spiritual heroism and it is this tradition

which Kamban has inherited, enriched and ennobled by singing that the moral and spiritual heroism of Rama triumphed over the martial heroism and intellectual heroism of Ravana and his hordes. The conclusion of Dr. Manavalan objectively arrived at from this study of Milton and Kamban is that neither the exhibition of martial prowess or physical valour prompted or propelled by 'immortal hate', nor the best-planned stratagem or clever and intelligent manoeuvres and manipulations to vanquish an opponent can be recognised as heroism; the voluntary and willing suffering patiently undergone, actuated by love, eternal and infinite, towards others alone deserves to be characterised as an ideal form of heroism; even martial prowess, physical valour, and intelligent planning and strategy can become loftier heroism if they are directed towards and aimed at achieving moral and spiritual ends.

Dr. Manavalan's approach is admirably suited to comparative literary criticism and I hope that he will bring out many more authentic works of fruitful research and outstanding quality.

The work of Dr. Manavalan is an outstanding one, characterised by wide reading, deep erudition, sound scholarship, clear analysis, incisive criticism and lucidity of language. To read the book is a rich and rewarding experience.

I am extremely happy that this valuable work is being published by Kamban Trust, Coimbatore.

Madras - 4
23-1-84

M. M. ISMAIL
President
Kamban Kazhakam
Madras

FOREWORD

Professor M. V. RAMA SARMA

VICE - CHANCELLOR

Sri Venkateswara University

Tirupati

Broadly speaking all Epic poetry is divided into two categories, the authentic and the literary. Invariably all authentic epics like the *Iliad*, *Beowulf* and the *Mahabharata* were written at a time when man's militant heroism was glorified. Literary epics like the *Aeneid*, *Jerusalemme Liberata* and *Paradise Lost* deal with heroism of a different type. Virgil's *Aeneid* concentrates on national heroism whereas Tasso's *Jerusalemme* presents a Christian hero. In *Paradise Lost* Milton defines his own concept of heroism as something unique. It does not conform to the pattern set by Homer and Virgil, nor does it emulate the example of chivalric heroism presented in the romances. Milton speaks of 'the better fortitude / Of patience and heroic martyrdom / Unsung'. So Milton's concept of heroism is something unattempted before.

Dr. A.A. Manavalan in his book *Epic Heroism in Milton and Kamban* tries to show that there is some affinity between the two poets in their attitude towards heroism. Even though the epic traditions inherited by Kamban and Milton may be different yet as epic poetry dealing with the nobler aspects of man's heroic spirit the two epics seem to be similar. Dr. Manavalan in his scholarly book contends that Kamban and Milton rejected the patterns of martial and intellectual heroism and they both opted for the loftier type of moral and

spiritual heroism. The contemplative type of hero, in whom ennobling heroic qualities like unswerving loyalty to God, patience, forbearance and wisdom are harmoniously blended, seems to be the ideal figure for Kamban and Milton.

To compare Kamban and Milton and to show that in their concept of heroism and 'in their vision of Life' they are alike, may sound a little odd. But Dr. Manavalan has gone through this process of comparative study thoroughly, meticulously and sincerely. He also feels that these two poets are relevant to 'this world of today' because the message these two poets give has an immediacy and a universality of its own. Great epics as these are, they stress the fundamental values of life and establish the need for man's implicit faith in God. As Dixon puts it in his *Epic and Heroic Poetry*, all epic poetry is the same whether it is of 'the East or West, North or South; its blood and temper are the same' and Dr. Manavalan has done a good job in giving a penetrating study of the epics of Kamban and Milton purely from the angle of heroism. Dr. Manavalan's book is based on his work for the Doctorate degree and it is a fruitful study in the realm of cross cultural assimilation so much in vogue now in literary criticism.

I hope Dr. Manavalan's book will be read by scholars and researchers alike with profit and pleasure. A difficult task is done with care and devotion and Dr. Manavalan is to be congratulated for his successful comparative study of Kamban and Milton.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Adequate information about the aim, scope and method of this study has been provided in the introductory chapter. The attempt has been chiefly at a diachronic study of the epic proposals—should it be a realistic representation or an idealistic portrayal—about human (heroic) predicaments and their human cum pseudo-human solutions. Milton and Kamban have been chosen in view of their being the best cumulative representatives of epic poetry in the West and the East respectively. Though my chief inspiration have been these two great and noble poets of the East and West, I could not have accomplished this task with as modest a success as possible, without the help and guidance of many a scholar and critic in the field. While I am all grateful to all of them in general, I wish to record my indebtedness to the following in special:

Dr. S. P. Appasamy, retired Professor of English, University of Madras, my first supervisor for his kind and scholarly guidance, and for his discussion, on my behalf, of this topic with wellknown Milton scholars like David Daiches and A. G. George; Dr. T. Prabhakar, Professor of English, University of Madras, my next supervisor for his sympathetic encouragement and practical guidance.

Professor T. P. Meenakshisundaran (the beacon light of unrivalled scholarship in the field of Tamilology is now no more with us), Professor K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar and Professor K. Chellappan, for their valuable suggestions to help improve the quality of this study.

Dr. G. R. Damodaran, Dr. K. Meenakshisundaram, Thavathiru Santhalinga Ramasamy Adigal, Dr. C. Balasubramanian, Dr. S. V. Subramanian, Dr. S. Ramakrishnan, Dr. K. D. Thirunavukkarasu, Dr. V. Veerasami, Dr. A. Joseph and Dr. E. Sundaramoorthy, for their sustained interest in and encouragement towards the completion of this study.

I am grateful to the authorities of the University of Madras for their kind permission to publish this thesis.

Publication of university dissertations is an enviable effort in India and most of the dissertations remain in their original form, unless and until some of them, rather a few of them are resurrected in book form through the U. G. C. financial assistance. In such a situation, I hereby record my humble thanks to Thiru G. K. Sundaram, Managing Trustee of the Kamban Trust, Coimbatore for having generously chosen to publish this study as a Kamban Trust publication. I have great pleasure in dedicating this work to this inspiring personality.

My sincere thanks are also due to the late revered N. Chinna-swamy Naidu, Professor M. R. P. Gurusami, Thiru E. Venkatesa Naidu, Dr. K. Vellimalai and Thiru G. M. Venkatesan, of the Kamban Trust.

I am happy to record my gratefulness to Justice M. M. Ismail for his profound and discriminating Preface; and to Professor M. V. Rama Sarma for his benign and scholarly Foreword.

My sincere thanks are due to Dr. V. Jayadevan and Dr. V. Murugan for their unfailing assistance in doing the strenuous job of reading the proofs. I appreciate the Printers for the neat execution of the work.

May I humbly request the reader to bear with me for the errors in the book, listed in the Errata, which have in spite of my best efforts crept in?

A A Manavalan

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ONE

INTRODUCTION

This age of ours is a fast changing one. Scientific progress and technological developments of this century have, among other benefits, brought the human world closer than ever before. Even nations of material self-sufficiency cannot remain in isolation now. It is being realized everywhere and by every lover of humanity that all nations with their various cultural spectra should come together, converge and merge into a more homogeneous whole. Cultural organisations on the international level strive hard to bring into focus the similarities in diverse cultures and to bridge the differences by cultural give-and-takes. Many are the faculties of human pursuit that are now engaged in such cross-cultural activities. Literature is one of such human pursuits that can achieve such cultural synthesis in terms of mutual understanding, mutual appreciation and finally commingling of the best in all into one homogeneous and wholesome community of the race of Adam and Eve.

It is with such a beneficial purport in view that a humble effort is made in the following pages to bring together two of the great epic poets of the West and the East for a comparative study of their works. John Milton of the Seventeenth Century England and

Kamban of the Ninth Century Tamilnad in the Southern part of India are the two epic poets examined here.

Epics as the custodians of respective cultures are veritable treasure-chests. As sign-posts of cultural progress, epics in general embody the cherished ideals of human life as envisioned by the respective poets. Such ideals are communicated through the portrayal of their epic heroes. A Study of the epic heroes of different cultures then in terms of the ideals represented by them enables us to widen our literary and cultural perspectives.

Milton and Kamban, though separated by the frontiers of culture and time, seem to have many similarities in their concept of heroism. As great men think alike, and as inspiration and insight which is the core of poetic vision, is universal in character, Milton and Kamban have given expression to more or less the same concept of heroism. The essential aspect of poetry being the vision of the poet in regard to his view of man and his place in this universe, the accidentals of poetry such as the differences in language, metre, diction and the social milieu do not limit us from our pursuit.

We have in this study limited our scope to the 'concept of heroism' as enunciated by Milton and Kamban in their epics. Milton's epics *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* and Kamban's epic *Kambarāmāyanam* are taken here as the primary texts of our study. Milton's other works such as *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes* are also included in this study for discussion in that "the four poems forming Milton's Heroic poetry amplify and illustrate Milton's concept of heroism."¹ Regarding Kamban, his epic alone, running to roughly about 10,500 stanzas is taken for discussion. As we do not have any authentic records of Kamban's life, no biographical elements are dealt with. It is, therefore, proper that no biographical materials regarding Milton are taken into consideration.

To facilitate our analysis, we have evolved a scheme of patterns that accommodates most of the aspects of heroic ideals portrayed by these poets. The patterns are not, however, evolved independent of the primary texts, but rather on the basis of the common material found in the texts. The scheme includes three patterns: Martial Heroism, Intellectual Heroism and Moral and Spiritual Heroism. Each pattern accommodates aspects relevant to the particular

pattern. In all, eighteen aspects are felt to be relevant for the analysis. A list of definitions (rather explanatory notes for the terms and phrases) representing the aspects is provided towards the end of this chapter. These explanatory definitions are given only as relevant to the texts analysed. It serves as a frame of 'aspectual' reference for the discussion.

In an effort to assess the poets' indebtedness to and their deviation from, their respective epic traditions, a brief survey of the epic traditions of Milton and Kamban is provided in chapters Two and Three respectively. In chapters Four, Five and Six, the main patterns are individually dealt with in regard to the primary texts of our study. A brief account of the epic poems taken for this study is provided in the appendix so as to facilitate easy comprehension of the themes of comparison discussed.

The method of discussion adopted here is one of comparative analysis. The textual materials are compared in respect of a particular aspect of heroism and the outcome of such comparative analysis is given at the end of each section. The last chapter records the general conclusions that emerge from this study in its entirety. It is interesting and instructive to note here that the epics of both Milton and Kamban use the technique of contrasts for the enunciation of their ideals. Regarding *Paradise Lost*, Douglas Bush observes:

It is through contrast that the poet achieves his finest effects, and the whole poem is a network of contrasts - heaven and hell, light and darkness, good and evil, love and hate, humility and pride, creation and destruction.²

Likewise *Kambarāṁāyanam* is also a contrastive study of virtue and vice; Ramarajya and its antithetical Ravanarajya, and so on. A separate study of these epics in relation to their use of this technique will be amply rewarding, bringing to light the fusion of theme and structure on the one hand, and of theme and technique on the other.

Studies using such comparative method have been many in the recent years; and many more are in the offing. As regards our subject, Dr. S. Ramakrishnan has done a dissertation on Kamban and Milton. He has compared Milton's epic *Paradise Lost* with

Kambarāmāyanam in terms of their structural design as related to epic genre. Dr. V. Sachithanandan has made a comparative study of Whitman and Bharati. Both the above studies have appeared in book form. Dr. K. Chellappan has compared *Cilappathikāram* and *Shakespeare's tragedies* in terms of their tragic vision. Dr. T. Prabhakar's dissertation done as early as in 1964 and submitted to the University of London examines Robert Southey's "The Curse of Kehama" and traces the influence of Indian thought and culture that shaped or engendered the creation of Southey's work. This study thus has many a fore-runner in the field of literary research using the method of comparison.

Such studies do inspire us to keep the spirit of poetry and its beneficent influence steady and continuous. It is in the awareness of such cultural use of poetry that its relevance to our life lies. "Looking down the vistas of time," observes Professor S.P. Appasamy, "we in India can never forget that poetry was at one time the most valuable form of communication evolved by man. The great epics have given us the unity in diversity that is Indian civilisation."³ It is with a view to realizing such an aim of unity in diversity not only among the people of India but also among the nations of the world that cross-cultural studies like the present one are pursued.

This comparative study does not however, go into the question of "causal" explanation of the texts compared, even though a diachronic glance at the development of the concept of ideal epic heroism may give a clue as to a "cause." Consequently no "influence" study nor any value judgments are aimed at. Objective discussions are held on the basis of explicit textual material with reference to a frame work of patterns explained below. Our prime concern being *synchronic* and *formal* instead of being diachronic and historical, this method of comparison tries to illuminate literature as a universal phenomenon, and to concentrate on the abiding and the constant, on common funds from diverse origins.

TERMS AND PHRASES AS RELEVANT TO THIS STUDY

I Martial Heroism

This is a pattern of act or acts wherein the protagonist relies upon and makes use of his martial prowess to get over his predicament whether uninvited or self-imposed. This kind of heroism is

also observed to be partaking of qualities like pride, passions, disobedience, uxoriousness and self-love which are either engendered by or which feed upon, one's physical strength. These qualities are therefore discussed under this pattern as its constituents.

Physical fortitude

The principal character makes use of his physical prowess to overcome his predicament. In such efforts moral considerations do not intervene. The principle, "Might is right" is followed. Warrior heroes are portrayed as representing this aspect of heroism.

Pride

Pride is considered here as engendered by one's unlimited physical prowess. Pride sometimes springs also from one's attainments such as scholarship, glory, position, virtues, etc. Whatever may be the source of pride, it is discussed as a trait of character bringing about one's fall or destruction besides causing harm to others.

Disobedience

Disobedience is discussed as a conscious denial to obey the system or law of one's society, or the order of one's Universe which governs one's physical, moral or spiritual life. This term is thus taken to mean a conscious refusal to abide by a system or order whereby one suffers or falls.

Inordinate passions

Inordinate passions are those which are not controlled or restrained i.e., not kept within orderly limits.⁴ Lust, anger and vengeance are the major passions discussed here. Lust is "excessive sexual appetite; libidinous desire."⁵ It is also taken to mean adultery, both 'single' and 'double'.⁶

Lust also includes a strong desire for power to which one is not entitled to in a given order or scheme of things.

Anger is another passion engendered when one's passions are denied gratification. It rages and emits hatred. Vengeance is equally a strong passion which inflicts injury on the agent of one's discomfiture.

These passions are discussed here as causes of one's ruin.

Uxoriousness

This is taken to mean "excessive fondness for and often submission to a wife."⁷ Such fondness may be expressed in obeying her wish, or yielding to her persuasion, either without considering the moral and spiritual implications thereof, or without being able to disobey such wish or persuasion, even if he is aware of such implications. Such obedience or surrender to wifely charms and persuasions amounts to violation of the domestic order whereby the man should govern the wife and not vice versa. Such violation leads to a graver ethical violation of better and higher forms of order such as the duties of State and the command of God.

Self-love

That is, love of oneself; regard for one's interests or well-being.⁸ As such it is antithetical to 'charity.' By corollary it is also taken to mean disregard for others' interest or well-being and in furtherance of the former, the latter is destroyed.

II Intellectual Heroism

This is a pattern of heroic act or acts wherein the protagonist uses his powers of intellect to get over his predicament. The end is victory and the means one's intellectual powers. In such heroic efforts moral considerations do not seem to intervene. This pattern of heroism is also thus amoral. It is discussed under the following aspects; vain wisdom, deceitfulness, and rhetoric.

Vain wisdom

Well-informed knowledge in matters concerned, but put to wrong use in order to achieve one's ends.

Deceitfulness

It means deceiving; causing a person to accept as true or genuine something that is false.⁹ It includes dishonesty, stratagem and disguise.¹⁰ Dishonesty is fraud; cheat. Stratagem is an artifice or trick designed to outwit or surprise the enemy.¹¹ Disguise means the use of changed dress or appearance for concealment or deception.¹² It includes any artificial manner assumed for deception.¹³

Rhetoric

Art of using language so as to persuade or influence others.¹⁴ This aspect of intellectual heroism makes use of the above aspects

also viz., 'vain wisdom' and 'deceitfulness' so as to hoodwink and victimize the opponents.

III Moral and Spiritual Heroism

This is a pattern of heroic act or acts in the performance of which moral considerations and spiritual significance receive greater attention. The protagonists in this pattern do not give exclusive weight to physical prowess or to even intellectual eminence. They subordinate these two qualities to moral rectitude or spiritual ends so as to ensure human happiness at the initial stage and to attain spiritual bliss in the final stage. The following aspects are discussed as contributing to this pattern of heroism: Moral and spiritual valour, true wisdom, humility and obedience, faith, resistance to temptations, patience, repentance, chastity and charity.

Moral and spiritual valour

This is taken to mean act or acts of physical strength and martial valour used to establish or defend moral and spiritual principles; employed as a means of serving moral and spiritual purposes.

True wisdom

Knowledge of any branch of human pursuits acquired by the protagonists through study, counsel or experience, put to right use; knowledge as a means of achieving loftier aims without compromising one's ethical and spiritual standards. It is also taken to mean one's powers of intellect in taking appropriate decisions in the given situations. That is 'right reason,' which is 'but choosing' also comes under this aspect.

Humility and obedience

Humility, a quality of being humble in thought and action, to elders and great people, is an expression of one's awareness of larger world, the universe in relation to his smallness. As such, it is not a sign of one's weakness and timidity, but rather a symbol of one's greatness of spirit, and wisdom of the universe.¹⁵

Obedience follows humility. It is taken to mean obedience to an order or system which governs one's situation or to those who represent such order or system which ensures the welfare of humanity at large.

These are antithetical to pride.

Faith

Faith is one's conscious belief willingly subscribed to the efficacy of the order or scheme of things which governs one's universe or world of existence.

Resistance to temptations

"The life of man upon earth is a life of temptation."¹⁶ Resistance to temptations is an index to the depth of one's faith and patience.¹⁷ One's ability to overcome such temptations is regarded heroic; more heroic than overcoming one's enemies in a battle field.

Patience

Patience is endurance, a kind of passivity wherein after long internal struggles reason prevails over emotions, and commands acceptance.¹⁸ It requires greater strength of mind, a nerve of steel to endure one's hardships which may be physical, moral or spiritual. This aspect is displayed when one is assailed by temptations of several kinds and it is nourished by one's firm faith. Different cultures, even the same culture through the ages, have approved different types of patience as an aspect of heroism.

Repentance

"Repentance is the relinquishment of any practice from the conviction that it has offended God."¹⁹ "The purest type of repentance" is "a clean confession combined with a promise never to commit the sin again."²⁰ Thus it is a sincere sorrow for one's past misdeeds, and a sincere resolution and endeavour, to the utmost of one's ability to conform one's future actions to the law of Good or God.

Chastity

Chastity is considered here as conjugal fidelity. Premarital and extra-marital sexual relationships are considered unchaste. Chastity is taken to be bisexual in character, i.e., male chastity is also seen observed or upheld to be an ideal of conjugal fidelity in some of the epics under discussion.

An active aspect of chastity which not only guards one's personal chastity but also champions the cause of chastity in others, also finds expression in certain epics.²¹

In the Indian context 'female chastity' is a comprehensive term. It includes besides one's fidelity, aspects like acceptance of the husband as her supreme head in almost all domestic affairs, love for him in terms of looking after his comforts, family honour, etc., and willingness to sacrifice herself in the interest of any one of these aspects. "To the ideal wife, her husband is as the very breath of her life, and is as inseparable in death as in life."²² In short, she would not survive him. As such, it has cultural characteristics.

Charity

It is used in the sense of a "disposition to think favourably of others, and do them good."²³ It springs from one's love of his neighbour. When it operates in terms of one's relationship with others such as domestic, national or international it is moral. Such moral charity becomes the more significant, the more it transcends the domestic frontiers. At the ultimate level it becomes a love of 'Universal Brotherhood' when one thinks, "Every village is my sweet native home; everyone is my kith and kin."²⁴

When such selfless love is expressed not in terms of one's relationship with others in this world, but in terms of one's realization of himself as an image of the 'nature' and 'glory' of God, and as such all his fellow beings partake of the same 'nature' and 'glory', it becomes 'spiritual'. In such love one "seeketh himself in nothing; but only desireth in all things that the glory of God should be exalted."²⁵

Moral qualities like compassion, mercy, friendship, generosity and justice are also discussed here as constituents of charity.

The aspects of heroism defined above and discussed in the following chapters are given in the following framework.

Martial Heroism

(discredited)

1. Physical fortitude
2. Pride
3. Disobedience
4. Inordinate passions
5. Uxoriousness
6. Self-love

Intellectual Heroism**(discredited)**

1. Vain wisdom
2. Deceitfulness
3. Rhetoric

Moral and Spiritual Heroism**(upheld)**

1. Moral and spiritual valour
2. True wisdom
3. Humility and obedience
4. Faith
5. Resistance to temptations
6. Patience
7. Repentance
8. Chastity
9. Charity

TWO

THE EPIC TRADITION
INHERITED BY MILTON

Milton could look back on three European traditions in the epic - the Classical, the Medieval, and the Renaissance traditions. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Virgil's *Aeneid* are taken here to represent the Classical tradition, which was the most powerful of the three. *The Divine Comedy* of Dante represents the Medieval; and *Os Lusíadas* by Camoens and *Jerusalem Delivered* by Tasso represent the Renaissance tradition. In addition we do have to take into account Spenser's *Faerie Queene* as being close to Milton both in time and place. It is these seven epics, then, that are analysed on the basis of the criteria adumbrated earlier.

MARTIAL HEROISM

1. Physical fortitude

The theme of the *Iliad* pivots on the "Wrath of Achilles"—which begins on the ground that Agamemnon, the over-all Chief of the Greeks, withholds from Achilles his rightful "geras" Briseis, thus wounding his honour. This results in Achilles' withdrawal from the war which was calamitous for the Greeks. But Achilles sulking in his tents is nothing compared to Achilles enraged by the death

of his friend Patroclus at the hands of the Trojan hero, Hector. Now the calamity is borne by the Trojans ending in the vengeful death and humiliation of Hector. In both these instances, it is Achilles' martial prowess that decides the issue, and which is the highlight of the epic.¹ In both cases too, the action seems to rest on a very personal rather than on a public issue. The brutal and merciless character of the wrath of Achilles is seen not only in his inhuman treatment of the dead body of Hector, but also in the merciless murder of Lykaon, a younger son of King Priam, even as the boy is clasping his knees, unarmed, and praying for his life.²

Yet Homer does recognise that war is terrible and destructive.³ He makes Poseidon declare, "Battle is evil, but not to fight is a worse evil."⁴ So it would seem at this stage that he accepts, but does not necessarily condemn the horror of war, and depicts human nature as he observed it around him as a part of the culture that prevailed at the time.⁵

In the *Odyssey* on the other hand, which is an epic of journeying homeward,⁶ the hero undergoes various trials and hardships which are overcome, not through his physical prowess but rather through the exercise of his ingenuity. The wellknown episodes with Calypso, Circe and Polyphemus show him overcoming odds through disguise and stratagem. The pattern of heroic action does not seem to turn upon mere physical strength and striking power, but rather in being cunning and wily.⁷ The hero of the *Odyssey* is a man of wiles rather than a man of might. For even in the final episode of the slaying of the suitors, though Odysseus shows his great physical strength in stringing his mighty bow, and sending his arrows through axeheads, it is his strategy and careful planning that enables him to destroy the suitors of Penelope.⁸ If physical prowess was the ultimate criterion, the relatives of the suitors would soon have destroyed Odysseus, but the conciliation arranged by the Goddess Athene resolves this crisis.⁹ So it seems that the central theme in the *Odyssey* is that violence and brute force may be overcome, nay should be controlled by intellect and reason. In these epics of Homer, then it would seem that the forces of war and might should ultimately be brought under the control of order and peace through the exercise of reason and the help of the gods.¹⁰

The journeying theme of the *Odyssey* is greatly augmented and widened in scope in Virgil's *Aeneid*, where it becomes a quest like the

Rāmāyana.¹¹ Aeneas leaves his native Troy—now destroyed by the Greeks—in search of a more abiding city to found the greatest city of ancient times, Rome. This mission of Aeneas is not essentially based on mere force, or even on reason and wile, but rather on *pietas*, a desire to fulfill one's duty. Though he too, travels the seas, like Odysseus and endures many hardships, he ultimately lands in Italy not as an invader or as an avenger, but as a suppliant, petitioning for a vacant site to found the city that he has been commissioned to establish. In *Virgil's* epic, the journey comes first, the battle later, for the natives of Italy rise against this stranger and force him to resort to physical prowess.¹² He does not enter the war for any personal motive as in the *Iliad*, but through a desire to fulfill his mission in life, his *pietas*, his destiny for a public cause ordained by the gods themselves. His righteous indignation and fiery valour enables him to defeat the opposing forces, but he does not represent the barbaric energy of the Homeric warriors. This quality has been transferred to Turnus and his forces of opposition.¹³ Aeneas accepts war as a necessary evil, an instrument of his ultimate purpose,¹⁴ but in spite of the slaughter of his dearest friend Pallas, he decides the final issue in a personal duel with Turnus, thus avoiding random fighting and needless killing. His ultimate purpose is building, not destroying, the eternal city. It seems clear then, that Virgil rejects the Homeric concept of might and physical prowess as an aspect of the heroic ideal, and presents instead the concept of *pietas* as the ideal of heroism, moral and spiritual strength displayed not merely in battle but in the total conduct of life in every situation¹⁵—a concept to be more completely developed by Milton.

Dante's *Divine Comedy* is an epic of quest, the quest of the human soul seeking the highest form of wisdom which leads to heavenly Bliss. It is a pilgrimage not realistically conceived, but a journey proceeding through Hell, Purgatory to the seven circles of Heaven.¹⁶ There is little scope in the theme itself for physical prowess as a pattern of heroic expression, since the journey is through regions of the mind and spirit, so much so that E.M.W. Tillyard calls it an "epic without being heroic."¹⁷ The poet does, however, reveal his attitude to the concept of martial heroism by assigning to wellknown warriors such as Achilles and Hector places in Hell. Thus he makes it clear that physical prowess is an undesirable pattern of heroism. As the greatest epic of the Christian ethic, there

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can be little doubt that Milton was greatly influenced by the stand taken by Dante, but he goes even further as we shall see.

Camoens' epic *Os Lusíadas* is even more national than the *Aeneid* in some respects for it celebrates "not one man but a nation of heroic men" as the title itself reveals; *Os Lusíadas* means "the sons of Lusus" who are the Portuguese.¹⁸ The theme of the epic shows that the mission of the Portuguese, as instanced by the voyages of Vasco da Gama, is not merely to discover the sea route to the Indies, but also to unite Europe with the continents of Africa and Asia through the benign bond of Christianity.¹⁹ The qualities displayed by the heroic Vasco da Gama are therefore of a different order from other heroes. Like Aeneas, da Gama is not primarily interested in military action, but he resorts to war when his purpose meets with opposition. Camoens' epic also depicts earlier warlike exploits by the Portuguese, through the flashback technique where the great kings of Portugal stop invasions or consolidate their political power. These battles are not fought for the sake of military glory or expansion, but in the national interest. The great battle of Salado fought by King Affonso the Fourth is shown as successful but brutal and cruel. Again Bacchus who is represented as opposing da Gama's voyages is symbolic of his position, and an old man decries this undertaking as lust for glory followed by moral corruption.²⁰ War and violence are justifiable only when used to bring about a higher goal, which is either in the national interest or an even loftier goal.

A somewhat similar position is found in Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, which is an epic based on the Crusades, though including allegory as well. This is a Holy War describing

The sacred armies, and the godly knight

That the great sepulchre of Christ did free (I, 1, 1-2).²¹

Tasso clearly subordinates war to the cause of religion, and is therefore considered as the highest task that man can undertake. His heroes Goffredo, Rinaldo and Tancredi do not depend merely on their physical prowess, but can succeed against their enemies only as they turn their thoughts to Heaven. The spiritual director and father confessor of the Crusaders plays a dominant role demonstrating that physical prowess is merely a tool in the service of religion.²² Like Virgil, Tasso shows the enemies of the Crusaders by investing

them with the old heroic ideal of the warrior of physical prowess—these are infidels and their supporters are the hosts of Hell. Needless to say they are defeated, and their ideal of heroism is therefore censured.²³

Edmund Spenser in his *Faerie Queene* uses the framework of Medieval chivalry to embody the quest theme in a large pattern of twelve quest adventures of knight errantry each with its own hero who is the personification of the twelve private and public virtues. The battle formula as an epic motif comes in because of the framework, but is not really given great prominence, since his over-all aim is "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline."²⁴ Of this large scheme, Spenser completed only six books embodying the virtues of Faith, Temperance, Chastity, Justice and Courtesy, while Prince Arthur who helps in co-ordinating the twelve separate adventures unites in himself the twelve private moral virtues which make for "magnanimity." Physical prowess does not really find a place in the action in spite of the romantic fusion of the contemplative and the active virtues.²⁵ Though Milton is reputed to have said that Spenser was his original, he was so different in character from him, that he seems to owe little to him. Milton's forthright condemnation of mere physical prowess stems from tradition, but was probably reinforced by his own knowledge of the civil wars.

2. Pride

Pride as an aspect of martial heroism is usually found under the garb of honour and prestige. Both Agamemnon and Achilles in the *Iliad* clearly demonstrate this failing. Agamemnon by right of being the over-all chief of the Greek forces arrogantly seizes Briseis, who should have been assigned to Achilles. It is this petty matter of a division of spoils of war that stirs Achilles to wrath. At the confrontation, Athene herself restrains him from violence, but he decides to withdraw his myrmidons from battle, leaving the Greeks sadly depleted. As a result the Trojans drive the Greeks even to their ships. Though Achilles is too proud to stoop to reconciliation, he is persuaded to send his friend Patroclus in his armour to stem the tide. It is the death of Patroclus that reduces Achilles to accept reconciliation, and he seems genuinely repentant, but Agamemnon's apology for his arrogance seems insincere. While

some critics like Routh feel that Homer glorifies pride or honour as a heroic ideal of that age²⁶ such pride has obviously been disastrous in its consequences, and is responsible for the split in the Greek alliance. Levy and Anderson would point to a more ambivalent attitude in Homer who ultimately is conscious that while honour has its value it also carries with it its weakness.²⁷ This seems further borne out by the fact that pride and honour do not play any significant part in the action of the *Odyssey*; the wily Odysseus is free from this fault.

In the *Aeneid*, Virgil does not portray Aeneas as subject to the domination of this excessive sense of honour or pride; he is the 'pious' hero, who is submissive to the will of the gods, and does not stress his own greatness at all. It is Turnus who is depicted as of the old heroic type; for it is his desire to display his own prowess in battle that leads him to slay Pallas, and to despoil him of the great embossed belt which he dons himself as a token of his 'geras.' It is this expression of gratuitous pride that causes his death at the hands of Aeneas. Turnus then is shown as an "example of...pride which leads a man too far and works his own destruction,"²⁸ while this moral is reinforced by the sage advice of Anchises from the underworld to Aeneas: "O Roman, remember to rule with your power... to be merciful to the conquered, and to cast down the proud."²⁹

The Divine Comedy being a great Christian epic of medieval times, does pay due attention to this cardinal sin of pride. Not only does Dante assign great rebels whose pride cannot be broken—like Uberti and Capaneus—to Hell, he further points out that "their pride is really their punishment"³⁰—thus driving home the point. Again in Canto VII of the *Paradiso*, Dante reinforces the same position by making Beatrice explain that the sin of Adam and Eve, our first parents, was essentially one of pride,³¹ a wilful aspiration to be equal with God, which brought about the Fall and all its consequences. Milton was equally orthodox in his views expressed in *Paradise Lost*, showing Satan as the acme of pride desiring to be equal and greater than God himself on the one hand, and later making him tempt Eve to be equal with God by eating of the fruit.

While Camoens does not portray pride as an aspect of heroic action, Tasso in *Jerusalem Delivered* does make use of it. Of the crusaders, Rinaldo "comes nearest to being a hero in the old sense.

He has the heroic pride and sense of honour."³² He refuses to brook interference or insult, and refuses to accept punishment for his killing of Gernando. This pride, born of his physical prowess, has to be brought under control, curbed and disciplined to serve the cause of the crusade. It is only after this that he is able to defeat Salimano the infidel—who is himself "as fine a soldier as any on the Christian side" and "singularly lacking in guile and treachery."³³ Both Salimano and Argante, courageous and valiant leaders of the infidels are shown as proud; and their defeat at the end is due to the fact that their pride has estranged them from Divine grace. Tasso makes his position with regard to pride quite clear in his epic.

In the *Faerie Queene* again a Christian work, we see that Pride is given full treatment in the first Book, where the Red Cross Knight allegorizing Holiness is overcome first by Orgoglio, an emanation of pride and represented as a giant into whose castle-dungeon he is thrown. And later the theme is given even fuller treatment in the palace of Lucifera to which the false Duessa leads the knight. Spenser contrasts the palace of Lucifera with the House of Alma. It is the gigantic Orgoglio who truly represents the quality of physical prowess resulting in pride, because of his gigantic strength. Lucifera on the other hand is the queen of the seven deadly sins! The Red Cross Knight, beset perhaps by spiritual pride is thus overcome and weakened till he is succoured by Prince Arthur through Divine grace. As Bayley points out, Spenser emphasizes the "unquestioning acceptance of the primary relation of the creature to the Creator, and the need for men to live in the light of and by the help of God's grace."³⁴

3. Disobedience — violation of order

The epic is concerned with the ordering of the universe, both celestial and human—the concept of a Kosmos of the two in harmony. The celestial shield of Achilles has been considered symbolic of this Kosmos, both heavenly, as it was made by Vulcan, and human. Yet it also represents an instrument of the disruption of this harmony or order (Book XVIII). The rape of Helen by Paris is a violation of the human, domestic order. This is soon followed by the Greek alliance to restore this break, but which only results in a further destruction of the social order through war. Nestor's great speech on the need to "rule and obey", and his contention that "it is better

to yield'' than to engage in destruction may be taken as a theme of the epic.³⁵ Achilles' rejection of this concept, his disobedience to the command of Agamemnon, and his withdrawal from the battle on the ground of personal honour are instances of further violation of the system of human order. The result of all this violation of order, human and divine is seen in the total destruction of Troy, the needless slaughter among the heroes on both sides, and the personal tragedies in the individual lives of Achilles, Patroclus, Hector and Paris to name just a few.

Similarly, though not to the same extent, the disobedience of the crew of Odysseus to the will of the gods and their own acknowledged leader by consuming the cattle of the sun—god (Book XII) leads to much destruction through a supernatural storm. Again, the suitors of Penelope violate the law of Zeus in their illtreatment of the beggar (Odysseus), and violate the human order in their interference and insolence in the very palace of Penelope. They thus bring upon themselves the destruction that they richly deserve. In the Homeric concept of Kosmos, any violation of order, human, divine, or both entails the disruption of the entire world.³⁶ Odysseus, with help from Athene, restores the order in Ithaca by his heroic action. The disruption of the divine and human order through Satan and Eve can only be restored by the heroic action (of another type) by the Son, in Milton.

The two most tragic episodes in the *Aeneid*, the immolation of Dido and the death of Turnus tell the same tale. Dido who has taken a vow to be faithful to the spirit of her dead husband breaks it when she gives herself body and soul, to Aeneas:

Nor longer dreams of secret love, but calls
It wedlock, and with this name decks her fault.³⁷

Though heroic in stature and in battle, Turnus is a 'rebel against the rule of Jupiter'.³⁸ Turnus breaks away from the council of the Italian chiefs who attempt to bring about a rational and less costly conclusion to the conflict, and brings down upon himself the destruction of one who has violated the divine and human orders. Virgil shows that he too accepts the classical concept of harmony and violation of the Kosmos.

Dante, as an orthodox Christian poet, explains quite clearly through Beatrice the rationale behind God's choice of His Son to

take on our flesh and to die upon the cross. She says, "the sin of our first parents was essentially one of pride and disobedience."³⁹ In his desire and aspiration to 'ascend' and to transcend the human order, man disobeys God, and he falls from grace. Dante, like Milton, would decry disobedience to God as partaking of hellish and Satanic nature. That is why, Dante consigns great political criminals and rebels to Purgatory to do penance before they are permitted to aspire to heaven.⁴⁰

It is only in the "theological machinery" of *Os Lusíadas* that we have any disruption of order. Bacchus who wishes to obstruct the march of events attempts to delay the voyage by creating violence and disorder in the elements. But the protecting power of Venus—in this case to be interpreted as divine love—discomfits these efforts of Bacchus who wastes himself in intrigues and fails.

Though Rinaldo is the greatest of the heroes of *Jerusalem Delivered*, he is also the most open to temptation. We have already noted his sensitivity to honour; now we note that he is also shown disobeying the order of the Crusade when he places his private love for Armida—in the episode of Armida's bower—before his duty as a crusader.⁴¹ He is made to realize his error, and return to duty as a true crusader through the power of the sage to whom Pietro directs the rescuers. Other than this single incident there does not seem to be any portrayal of disobedience or disorder in *Jerusalem Delivered* in spite of its allegorical nature.

The Red Cross Knight, representing Holiness, overcomes error, but succumbs to the wiles of Archimago and Duessa, but there is no wilful defiance on the part of the Knight in Book 1. The famous Bower of Bliss episode again is not a wilful disobedience but a fall into sensual pleasure through weakness of spirit. Spenser does not deal at length with the aspect of disobedience except through his allegory of the forces of evil such as Sans Loy, Sans Joy, and Sans Foy or Kirkrapine, whose names indicate their action. Milton could have gained but little from him.

4. Inordinate passions

(a) Lust

It is the adulterous love of Paris of Troy with Helen that sparks off the ten years' war. During the conflict, a duel between Menelaus,

the husband of Helen and Paris could have decided the issue without further bloodshed, but Paris is spirited away from the battlefield by Aphrodite and conveyed to Helen's bed! Paris is over-conscious of his personal charm, and Helen is equally ambivalent in her choice between her husband and Paris—so that both exhibit the 'madness of lust' which is a foil to the 'battle madness' of Achilles and Hector. Among the gods too, Hera's sudden seduction of Zeus (*Iliad*, XIV) during the hectic scenes of the battle provides a sidelight and commentary on the inordinate passion of the human pair. Strangely enough these lovers seem little affected by the disasters they bring about on the society to which they belong. Does Homer nod, or is he just amused at the madness of men and gods?⁴²

Though one could hardly accuse Odysseus of inordinate passion, there is some truth in Robert Graves's comment that to him, "Penelope and Circe seemed as one" and that for "Ulysses"

All lands were ... Ithaca: love tossed

He loathed the fraud, yet would not bed alone.⁴³

Odysseus does accept the bed of many an enchantress on his ten years' journey, but only as a means to extricate himself from obstacles preventing his ultimate end to reach home.⁴⁴ In contrast, the suitors in the palace of Odysseus exhibit a lack of control over their passion for Penelope on the one hand, while on the other they indulge their passions freely with her handmaidens. This inordinate passion is condemned in that they face destruction at the hands of the legitimate husband on his return.

In the *Aeneid*, Dido is the most far-reaching embodiment of inordinate passion. Her love for Aeneas, and desire for re-marriage is natural as her sister Anna points out, but the passionate Dido has made a vow to Sychaeus at his death, which vow she equally passionately now breaks when she marries Aeneas in the cave.⁴⁵ Though Aeneas is shown as in love and seduced by Dido's passion, he is not subject to inordinate desire. He places a higher value on the divine mission which requires him to leave Carthage and abandon Dido, which he does with calm resolution:

His mind unmoved, his tears fall down in vain.⁴⁶

Dante shows it is a part of damnation to experience desires that we can no longer gratify⁴⁷; and condemns persons who yield

to inordinate passion in love, to Hell. The most famous pair of lovers in *The Divine Comedy* are Paolo and Francesca who are pictured as being whirled together in a wintry landscape blown whither the wind takes them but bound together for ever, unable to gratify their passion. Yet it would seem that the medieval world condemned the passionate man more than the woman. De Sanctis declares, "The passionate man is never called hero, while many a woman in love is a heroine".⁴⁸ Since Dante is a moral realist, he always subordinates pathos to ethos.⁴⁹

King Fernando's inordinate passion for a Spanish woman is censured by Camoens in *Os Lusíadas*. But he does not take an extreme position. For instance, he castigates Affonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese Viceroy in India for "sentencing to death a soldier who had been with a woman intended for the Queen's court,"⁵⁰ and deplores the cruelty thus:

It seems to me of savage breasts the style,
Of an inhuman and insulting gall,
To make a man for such a fault to die
As love and human frailty qualify.⁵¹

Though accepting lust as a vice, Camoens proposes punishment according to the station of the sinner, harsher for the highly placed, lighter for the humble.

Rinaldo the romantic, deserts his duty as a crusader and retires to Armida's bower, for which he is duly censured till he reforms in Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*:

Her to command; to serve it pleased the knight,
He, proud of bondage; of her empire, she. (XVI, 21,1-2)⁵²

But this is in the true romantic and chivalrous strain. It is not lust in the illicit or adulterous fashion as in the *Iliad*.

Spenser in *Faerie Queene* is much more preoccupied with inordinate passion—adulterous, incestuous and promiscuous. We find the episodes of Acrasia in Book II and her Bower of Bliss; and we have Argante, Paridess and Hellenore in Book III and Radigund in Books IV and V. In each of these instances the love or passion portrayed is far from truly romantic—it is the parody of romance, being unnatural and excessive forms of lust. But in every case

Spenser is at pains to show that these forms of inordinate desire are defeated or destroyed by their corresponding virtues, Temperance, Friendship and Chastity respectively. The moral Spenser gravely censures and condemns such inordinate and excessive passions as immoral and un-Christian.

(b) *Anger*

The Iliad of Homer is unique in that its major theme is anger—"the wrath of Achilles". It is this wrath that sets the action of the epic in motion, first being responsible for the destruction and defeat of the Greek forces and later, after the death of Patroclus, of the defeat of the Trojans and the gross humiliation of Hector, ending with the terrible sack of the city of Troy. The destructive nature of anger is well brought out by Homer's own use of the metaphor of fire,⁵³ an all-consuming rage, destroying the individual, and all-consuming war, destroying a whole civilization. The enormity of human waste as a result of this destructive passion is only too evident while the irony of the epic lies in the fact that Achilles and Agamemnon first quarrel over a woman, Briseis, and the war itself is over another woman, Helen!

In strong contrast to the *Iliad* is the protagonist of the *Odyssey*, who is in complete control of his passions,⁵⁴ for he is ensnared by none of the sirens and enchantresses that use their wiles on him—even Circe herself. Odysseus' final destruction of the suitors is not inordinate anger, but righteous indignation and punishment of evil.

Turnus and Queen Amata are victims of *furor impius*, the violent passion of anger, or irrational fury when they learn of the intended marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia. Their fury is not in accordance with the royal order which has proposed the match on the human plane, and is certainly against the wishes of the gods who have appointed Aeneas to a divine mission. Their fury is therefore defeated in its purpose, and destructive of themselves. The other great example of anger, is 'the wrath of Aeneas' which is no less violent than that of Achilles himself, when he learns the death of his friend Pallas at the hands of Turnus. Like the consuming fire that wrath is, Aeneas indulges in merciless slaughter, even when the victims are pleading helplessly for their lives. There seems to be little justification for such a death of Mago or Tarquinius (*Aeneid*,

X, 521 ff, 550 ff). Turnus too is finally brought to the point of pleading for his life, but he has been so obstructive of the divine mission that his actions may be considered as *impius* and therefore worthy of the extreme penalty. Critics have been divided in their comment on this episode for such heroic fury seems ill-suited to the exponent of the Roman virtues with his strong distaste for war.⁵⁵

It is no wonder then, that Dante treats anger as "an expression of demonic influence over the soul",⁵⁶ and hence places persons who have given vent to their wrath in Hell.

While there is no such portrayal of anger in *Os Lusíadas*, Tasso portrays devils as augmenting and strengthening the fury of the infidels, showing it to be a demonic passion. Even Rinaldo's fury in killing Gernando is censured since it is directed against a fellow crusader in the service of Christianity. "The ireful virtue" should be governed by reason, according to Tasso.⁵⁷ We do not find any major portrayal of inordinate anger in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, even in the most difficult and dire situations.

(c) *Vengeance*

Homer shows Achilles as uncompromisingly vengeful, thus endowing him with another of the inordinate passions. Revenge for an insult to his honour leads to his withdrawal from battle, and revenge for the death of Patroclus triggers off his unwise and uncontrolled rage against Hector. Merciless slaughter, and the insulting of the dead, however, cannot be condoned. Though Homer considered revenge to be justifiable, "insulting the dead was wicked."⁵⁸ Achilles exceeds the limits of vengeance by dragging Hector's body around the walls of Troy behind his chariot. Such a deed is futile and ignoble, and it is only when the bereaved Priam entreats for the body of his son, that Achilles becomes sane again and grants his request. Thus it is clear that the vengeance of Achilles is an inordinate passion—a madness.

The vengeance that Odysseus wreaks on the suitors for their behaviour towards his wife and son in his absence again shows that this heroic trait has some sanction in Homer's world. This is strengthened by the fact that the goddess Athene herself aids and assists him in this revenge.

The uncontrolled wrath of Aeneas against Turnus, which seems out of character may be accounted for as a kind of madness as in the case of Achilles. But the motive behind the actions of Aeneas is not only personal; it is also a righteous indignation for the public cause which is his mission. In the cultural climate of the Emperor Augustus, the wild and intemperate action of Achilles would have been viewed primitive, but obviously vengeance was still permissible, and Virgil seems to justify it on political and national grounds.⁵⁹ He even makes Aeneas hesitate before plunging his sword through Turnus's body, suggesting the tension in his heart between what he considered a part of his duty and what he would have done if it was merely a personal matter.⁶⁰ The refinement is unmistakable.

It is noteworthy that none of the later epics we are dealing with depict this characteristic passion in any of their protagonists.

5. Uxoriousness

None of the epics under discussion portray this aspect as applied to any of their major characters.

6. Self-love

In the *Iliad*, Homer shows us a confederation of egotistical chiefs, drawn together in a common cause, but still greatly motivated by concepts of personal prowess and desire for glory and booty. It is selfishness that is the cause of the rupture between the extremely individualistic Achilles and Agamemnon, who think of little or nothing beyond their personal honour and glory. Achilles, "loves things and people for the honour they give him", and "is surrounded by friends because he needs their adoration".⁶¹ The breach of fealty is due to this self-love which is a destructive force, for it does not make for cohesion in society.⁶² The common purpose that has brought them to Troy is not strong enough to lose themselves in. Unlike Beowulf, Roland, Aeneas or even Satan, their mission seems secondary to their own aggrandisement.⁶³

Odysseus on the other hand does show more than selfish desire for recognition and glory. His love of his own home, his love even for his crew for whose sake, he undergoes patiently many sufferings—most often due to their disobedience and folly, and his steadfastness

of purpose, set him apart from the heroes of the *Iliad*. But above all it is his love for Penelope which is not based entirely on *eros* or *agape*, but also on *philia*, that attachment to one's normal and natural social environment, which is the primary drive over the ten years' voyage. It is such a saving grace, such an identification of his own welfare with that of his kith and kin and that of his comrades that marks him as a supreme leader. If he is guilty of self-love, his egotism has sent its roots out more widely into his personal environment than that of Agamemnon, Achilles or Ajax.⁶⁴

The pious Aeneas is certainly not guilty of such self-love, being wholly submissive to the divine mission. In the *Aeneid*, it is Dido that projects this attribute to its greatest height, for she is obsessed by her selfish passion for Aeneas, and hence neglects the great works she has undertaken in Carthage:

Half-built the works hang, and the great

Menacing walls and cranes that touch the sky. (IV, 88-89)⁶⁵

It is her self-love and injured pride that drive her to self-destruction in a mood of frustration and self-pity. Virgil, then condemns such self-love as bringing down evil upon one's self and one's society, even more clearly than Homer himself.

Dante, definitely censures self-love by consigning to Hell such personages as Achilles, Dido, Mark Antony and such others. *Os Lusitadas* does not portray this characteristic as it is opposed to its theme.

Armida's love for Rinaldo in *Jerusalem Delivered* is purely selfish, so much so that she desires to revenge herself upon Rinaldo like Dido cursing Aeneas. In her frustration she would have killed herself, if Rinaldo had not persuaded her to give up this paganism. Ultimately she responds to the wider range of love proposed by Rinaldo and is thus saved from self-destruction.

Self-love is so antithetical to the whole of Spenser's virtues of Charity, Justice and Courtesy, that it is discredited in the *Faerie Queene*. As a Christian epic also Spenser realized only too clearly that self-love had no place in his system, if his heroes were to realize Grace from God in order to save their souls. Milton of course, being again a clearly Christian poet discredits self-love, as we shall see soon, in clearer terms.

INTELLECTUAL HEROISM

1. Vain wisdom

Though the very names of Nestor and Odysseus have become bywords for wisdom, and due respect is given to Nestor as the oldest and wisest of the advisors of Agamemnon and the Greek chiefs, Nestor does not really play an integral part in the action of the epic. His only practical suggestion, other than his contributions in the meetings of the chiefs, is that a wall be built as a fortification around the Greek camp (Book VII). Odysseus on the other hand is much more practical, as he shows in his persuasive and unemotional speech to win back Achilles to co-operation with the Greek chiefs (Book IX). If he reaches heroic heights it is in the great stratagem of the Trojan Horse, which finally enables the Greeks to enter the city of Troy and to effect its utter defeat and destruction. The interposed episode of Athene's defeat of Ares (XXI) suggests the superiority of the intellect over physical might.

This theme is carried out further in the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus really proves himself to be *polytropos*, a "man of many turns" who is "never at a loss".⁶⁶ In episode after episode it is the wile of Odysseus that saves the situation, so that he is recognized even by the gods as the cleverest and slyest of mortals as Athene is of the immortals. Odysseus introduces himself to the Phaeacians as one "known among men and gods for the skilfull use of my mind."⁶⁷ So in the *Odyssey* the hero is certainly an embodiment of wisdom and insight on the one hand, but also of cleverness and guile on the other. His knowledge also extends to crafts such as the building of rafts, boats and sailing. He is as well a master in the use of the bow and other warlike implements. The thoroughness with which he cleanses and disinfects the hall after the slaughter of the suitors shows his knowledge of medicine, while his polite and courteous behaviour marks him as a man of the world. His love of knowledge is so great that he prefers human knowledge to immortality,⁶⁸ a theme that Tennyson has made immortal. But Homer does not seem to distinguish between the two 'aspects—wisdom and guile; wisdom used for good purposes and guile for more evil intent. Thus it is that even Odysseus' wisdom may be classified under 'Vain wisdom'.

In the *Aeneid*, all knowledge and wisdom is subordinated to *pietas*, and no particular crisis is shown as being resolved purely

through the force of the intellect. Similarly *The Divine Comedy* offers no scope for the portrayal of pure powers of intellect for such purposes as are devoid of spiritual content. Nor is there any salient example of such vain wisdom to be found in *Os Lusíadas*, which again is purely a religious allegoric epic. Though Spenser does use the wiles of Archimago and Duessa, they are not really examples of the use of "vain" knowledge.

In *Jerusalem Delivered* however, we have for the first time not only a treatment of vain wisdom or guile, but also a discrimination in the use of the intellect for purposes, good and evil. Armida is not merely extremely beautiful, but also extremely clever. She is of the type of Medea and Circe, for she uses her gifts as a devoted infidel for the mistaken end of luring Rinaldo from his sacred duty as a crusader. Her knowledge and wisdom is used for a nefarious end as an addition to her personal charm and beauty. Strangely enough, the sage to whom Pietro, the father confessor directs the knights, also has powers and knowledge equal to those of Armida acquired in his pagan days; but he is now prepared to use them for the purpose of furthering God's design, and for good ends. Tasso shows that knowledge used for good ends is more powerful than witchcraft, and hence such knowledge is really a means to a good life.⁶⁹ Thus he becomes *the first of the epic poets of the European tradition to discriminate in the use of knowledge or wisdom for good or evil purposes*. Milton certainly built upon this foundation when he endowed Satan with vast knowledge and equally vast guile.

2. Deceit (Dishonesty, Disguise, and Stratagem)

It is a surprising thing to find that it is the Trojans who do not resort to deceit or lies, and do not seem to quarrel among themselves; and even among the Greeks it is only Odysseus that is shown in Book X as dishonest when he promises Dolon, the Trojan spy his life, "learns from him the positions of the forces in Hector's camp and cuts off his head, which was still speaking as it fell."⁷⁰ All may be fair in love and war, but this episode leaves a distasteful feeling in so heroic a poem. It is indeed ironical that in spite of their ten years of fighting the Greeks could only capture and destroy Troy through a deceitful stratagem, a ruse again devised by Odysseus,⁷¹ though it seems to have the approval of the gods, and the special patronage of Athene. It is the gods who make use of

disguise, when they visit the earth as we find Poseidon does twice (Books XIII & XIV), Athene twice (Books IV and XXII) and Hermes once (Book XXIV). They come to earth to aid their favourites, and no deceit is intended, except in the case of Athene who deliberately deceives the Trojans by taking the form of Laodokos who induces Pandarus to shoot at Menelaus, thus breaking the truce; and finally by pretending to be Deiphobos, she beguiles Hector into making a stand against Achilles which he would not otherwise have done. Athene thus assures victory for the Greeks.

In the *Odyssey* Odysseus does not hesitate to tell lies and so deliberately misleads his friends and even his enemies. He is thus able to deceive King Alcinous, at the beginning, and even his old father Laertes at the end. On one occasion he even lies to the goddess Athene saying that he is a Cretan (Book XIII). Of course he uses this device to extricate himself from difficult situations. The most spectacular is when he tells the Cyclops Polyphemus that his name is No-man, and thus escapes, having first blinded him. As for disguise, Athene herself aids him to deceive Alcinous by making him taller and handsomer so that he could elicit the king's support by way of ships for his return to Ithaca.⁷² At the end of the *Iliad* he disguises himself as a beggar who leads in the wooden horse to Troy, and at the end of the *Odyssey* as an old man in rags to wreak vengeance on the suitors. In many of these same episodes Odysseus also uses stratagem. As has been pointed out the Wooden Horse was his idea, and the careful preplanning for the slaughter of the suitors was also his. His escape from Polyphemus' cave is a classic fairytale, and his similar escapes from Scylla and Charybdis, and the Sirens show his resourcefulness and ingenuity.

The concept of the heroic in the *Odyssey* is in marked contrast to that of the battle-maddened warriors of the *Iliad*. Now it would seem that cunning is valued as much as courage, and that intelligence and forethought are indispensable.⁷³ The heroic action does not depend on might and valour, but on ingenuity and versatility.

Virgil does not hesitate to criticise the treachery and cruelty of the Greek heroes in the *Aeneid*, and shows that Troy was not destroyed by open and honourable war, but by treachery and deceit.⁷⁴ Similarly Dante relegates traitors, either to the church or to the state, to the nethermost circle of Hell. The deceitful and the

fraudulent are thus placed in the lower circles of Hell implying greater torment and punishment. While discussing the order of the deadly sins in relation to Dante's epic, T.S. Eliot says that treachery is greater than lust.⁷⁵ Dante rejects outright such use of the intellect without moral or spiritual concern as unheroic.

In Camoens' epic, Bacchus symbolizes cunning, disorder and deceit, qualities that the poet also associates with the "barbarism" of the East.⁷⁶ The machination of Bacchus who tries to prevent da Gama's entry into Mozambique fails because of the support of Venus. In like vein he ascribes tricks and treachery to the Moors, who try to prevent the Portuguese from leaving India; but the perfidious machinations are all defeated. On one occasion Bacchus even disguises himself as a Christian, and raises a Christian altar, himself worshipping thereat: "the false God came to adore the true."⁷⁷ But Venus again protects the Christian host who are thus deceived, and prevents them from entering Mombasa. Camoens thus ascribes deceit to the infidels and evil spirits.

In Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, intellectual dishonesty takes the form of magic and sorcery. The infidel Ismeno attempts to obstruct the task of the crusaders through necromancy, and insight into the weaknesses of the characters, thus victimizing them through their particular weakness. This he is able to do with the help of devils. Similarly the enchantress Armida uses her charms and intellectual gifts to lead Rinaldo astray. It is clear from the attitude that Tasso takes that he would not condone such intellectual dishonesty.

An equally downright condemnation of dishonesty, whether it be deceit or disguise is found in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Examples can be taken from Book I, where Archimago, symbolizing hypocrisy and Duessa symbolizing falsehood team up to break up the union of the Red Cross Knight (Faith) and Una (Truth). Through disguise and deceit, both these are able for a time to mislead and misguide the Red Cross Knight and even to lead Una herself into trouble. But their machinations are ultimately brought to light; they are condemned, exposed and driven out, with the help of Prince Arthur. Spenser would never countenance the kind of heroism that Odysseus embodies. There is little doubt that Milton,

as a great Christian poet would follow the tradition of these earlier Christian poets.

3. Rhetoric

Although the epic often contains lofty rhetoric in speeches by the characters as an interlude to action, rhetoric as a device of persuasion does not find excessive use in the *Iliad*. The earlier speeches by Achilles and Agamemnon do not come under this head. It is when Ajax, Phoinix and Odysseus are sent to Achilles on a mission of reconciliation, to persuade him to rejoin the Greeks in battle that an occasion occurs. Ajax is a blunt plain-spoken strong man who has no gift of rhetoric. Even the clever persuader, Odysseus does not manage to turn Achilles' mind, and Phoinix who speaks last gets an attentive hearing but is unsuccessful in bringing Achilles back to the Greek side. This particular type of rhetoric is not much in evidence in the *Iliad*.

The *Odyssey*, however, is quite another story, and Odysseus here is endowed with the silver-tongued oratory of the expert in language. Yet his speeches are always functional,⁷⁸ though he keeps his audience spellbound, sometimes all through the night. King Alcinous is enthralled by Odysseus' 'divine story', and is prepared to listen all night. On the next occasion, the King and Queen Arete actually do sit up all night with all their nobles listening to him. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and we find King Alcinous prepared to furnish Odysseus with ships and crew to take him on his voyage home. The speeches were therefore persuasive, though not deceitful. There is no false logic, nor are his hearers led to any wrong course of action through his words. This gift of Odysseus is an aspect of intellectual heroism.

In the *Aeneid*, Virgil another great master of language uses rhetoric with a purpose less admirable than Homer in the *Odyssey*. It is Turnus who is the master of such speech, which he uses against Aeneas. In what is called the "Iliad Equation" he produces the analogy that he is fighting like Menelaus for his wife who has been violently taken away from him, and must of necessity revenge himself on the Trojans. His speech moves his soldiers to "take their posts in picket stations around the Trojans."⁷⁹ Virgil, by applying this gift of rhetoric to Turnus, the defeated antagonist of the *Aeneid*

censures such a use of rhetoric. Milton would follow Virgil in applying false rhetoric to Satan and his chiefs.

Dante offers a striking comment on the use of rhetoric by placing "Ulysses" in his *Inferno*. Dante characterizes him, "as an anti-Aeneas...for he lacks the essential quality of *pietas*...The essential characteristics of Ulysses' rhetoric is that it is completely self-serving, dedicated to a heroic enterprise without any sense of moral duty."⁸⁰ Clearly Dante does not approve of rhetoric which does not further moral or spiritual interests.

The epics of Camoens, Tasso and Spenser do not portray this particular type of rhetoric unless we consider Spenser's long argument by Despair in favour of suicide as an example. Such rhetoric as the subject matter makes it clear is morally unjustified.

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL HEROISM

1. Moral and Spiritual valour

The Homeric code of conduct is, as we have seen, based on the concepts of might and honour, under which war and violence, vengeance and even deceit were acceptable. Though there are indications that moral principles such as justice, fidelity, and chastity were peacetime concepts, the predominant code does not present them as viable at a time of war. So there is little consideration of moral or spiritual valour in the *Iliad*.

In the *Odyssey*, on the other hand it is the powers of intellect, ingenuity, and cunning that are presented as predominant. Though we also have the prowess of Odysseus with his bow during the slaughter of the suitors the resolution of the crisis depends only upon a cunning strategy. Little moral or spiritual conflict is presented.

Virgil in his *Aeneid* embodies a loftier code of conduct, showing that the ethos of the times had undergone some change. Aeneas is a man with a mission which he undertakes with the approval and under the guidance of the gods. While it is true that he seems sometimes to contravene humane considerations—for instance when he abandons Dido or kills Turnus even when he is pleading for mercy—on the whole his code is based upon obedience to a higher power. The epic heroism depicted in Virgil shows then, a superior code to that found in the earlier epics of Homer.

Though Dante is a Christian poet par excellence, his theme which is a psychic journey through different states of spiritual progress, offers no scope for the portrayal in action of moral or spiritual valour. All that is possible to assume is that the souls who have been able to move from purgatory to the circles of heaven have shown such heroism.

The major preoccupation in Camoens' epic *Os Lusíadas* does not contain a distinct portrayal of such valour. But it must be kept in mind that instead of mere individual glory, the glory of the nation—the Portuguese, who attempt to spread Christianity through their efforts at exploration and colonization in Africa and Asia is again a step beyond the earlier concepts of heroism.

Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* which uses the action of the crusades as its base, is also an allegoric presentation of the psychic forces within man himself. So in the basic action we find that martial prowess is made subordinate to a spiritual purpose—it may even be interpreted that martial prowess has been transformed or sublimated into spiritual heroism. The ethos of the medieval times seemed to demand, especially during the revival of the spirit that occurred during the crusades, that mere chivalry and martial glory be turned to the glory of God in both personal and public life.⁸¹ Tasso makes an earnest attempt to present this transformation of the old concept of the heroic into the transcendental glory of the spirit.⁸² There is little doubt that Milton found this a pointer to the position which he was to take up some centuries later.

Spenser leaned over much on the side of allegory, so that, the bases of his epic provide merely a framework, and an outdated framework at that, for his moral and spiritual personification of the virtues. If he borrowed from Tasso, he attempted to 'overgo' his master in the direction of a much clearer delineation of the virtues that are necessary in both private and public life. Since the emphasis is on the allegorical, the adventures and the martial prowess of his heroes are pitched against evils both public and private that prey upon the human spirit. The triumph of this spirit with the help of Prince Arthur who represents not merely Magnanimity but also the Grace of God, is the ultimate end of each adventure and of the epic as a whole. Milton, as we shall see, moved deeper into the

psychological field on the one hand, and more firmly into the theological when he came to write *Paradise Lost*.

2. True wisdom

The careful separation of the concept of 'vain' wisdom from 'True' wisdom is necessary for a precise insight into the concept of heroism. Since the term wisdom is sometimes applied also to an attribute of the Divine, the term can be seen to have an intellectual connotation and a moral and spiritual one as well.

We have already seen that it is the intellectual aspect of wisdom used for either selfish or deceitful purposes, that predominates in the epics of Homer. Wisdom is not the attribute of the major protagonists of the *Iliad*, and such wisdom as is exemplified by Nestor may be the result of experience, and may be experience rather than wisdom. In the *Odyssey*, the protagonist, Odysseus displays vast knowledge of crafts, peoples, and lands, and shows himself to be extremely intelligent and resourceful in furthering his own interests and escaping from dangerous situations. Though his thirst for knowledge disposes him to prefer it to immortality, it is not true wisdom that is exemplified in him. For only too often he succeeds in his plans because of lying and deceit, stratagems and tricks which are ingenious. This cannot be counted as true wisdom.

Virgil's achievement in the *Aeneid* consists in his realization that the simple-minded pursuit of earthly pleasure and glory is to be eschewed in preference to the submission to the will of the gods, which can be achieved through their divine aid and grace. The disastrous situation in which he leaves Troy as an exile, is raised to a glorious mission, that of founding Rome, to which end he sheds his earlier self, and becomes 'heroic' in the process of this acquired 'piety'. He gradually acquires an awareness of the permanence and continuance of the human spirit, and the triumph of Good over Evil, and hence acquires a deeper insight into the true nature of life.⁸³ To foresee all possible emergencies and to be ready for them is according to Stoicism, a mark of wisdom.⁸⁴ It is this wisdom that enables him to declare to the Sybil:

I have foreseen and thought all in my soul.

(*Aeneid* VI, 105)⁸⁵

Dante's concept of wisdom is wholly spiritual; each of the circles of heaven is presided over by a saint who is the embodiment of a particular virtue, and an appropriate aspect of wisdom. For, "to Dante, there is a direct connection between virtue and knowledge,"⁸⁶ which results in wisdom. Knowledge has to be purified from the grossness of human pursuits, before it can lead to real perception of absolute truth. Such a spiritual development alone leads to the fulfilment of man's highest aspiration to reach the abodes of heaven and the circles of the Blest.⁸⁷

In spite of the general desire of Camoens to further the cause of Christianity by bringing Africa and Asia into closer contact with Christians, there is no valid expression or embodiment of the concept of true wisdom in *Os Lusíadas*.

In Tasso's presentation of the spiritual aspect of life in *Jerusalem Delivered* in spite of its allegorical significance, stress is not laid on wisdom. The spiritual control of the crusaders, and the use of the knowledge and supernatural gifts of the Sage to counteract Armida's use of sorcery and witchcraft may be accepted as an aspect of the exercise of wisdom. This supernatural power, gained while the sage was still pagan is now directed to good ends, and brought under the overall design of God, and may therefore be acceptable.

Spenser was enamoured of the concept of the Aristotelian 'mean' between two extreme positions of virtue and vice. The power of choosing and keeping to this golden mean may be isolated as the exercise of wisdom in Spenser.⁸⁸ This choice is through right reason, which leads to the right choosing, and the ability to control unruly passion or overcome sudden temptation. The Red Cross Knight's sojourn in the House of Holiness is an instance in point; another may be the rescue of Sir Guyon from the power of Acrasia through the efforts of the Palmer. This latter incident seems closely akin to the rescue of Rinaldo from Armida by the two knights in Tasso's epic, at the instance of the sage. Wisdom in the *Faerie Queene* is then the exercise of right reason in choosing the Golden Mean under the inspiration of the divine grace, and its service to the cause of virtue.

3. Humility and Obedience

The Homeric concept of greatness does not include humility or spiritual obedience. He makes no attempt to portray such a

virtue. Obedience on the other hand would be of two kinds, obedience to one's chief, and obedience to the gods—both these may be combined in what may be seen as an acceptance of the world-order of that age. The Greek heroes, Diomedes and Nestor are conscious of the ordering of their world, and a part of their greatness consists in their acceptance of that ethos. Achilles on the other hand is unwilling to obey Agamemnon, the overall leader of the Greeks. He is forced however to obey the gods. Although the saying in the *Iliad* runs "Whoever obeys the gods, to him they gladly hearken,"⁸⁹ the pride of Achilles is such that he is not suppliant even to the gods. At the very opening of the *Iliad*, Athene takes him by the hair and physically restrains him from violence on Agamemnon. At the end, it is his mother Thetis herself that intervenes to restore the body of Hector to Priam. Achilles obeys with the remark: "if the gods are frowning, [I]...will give up the body without argument."⁹⁰

In the *Odyssey*, since the protagonist is himself the leader par excellence, there is no question of his obeying any one else, or showing any humility. Odysseus does, however, take advice, and follow the instructions of the gods and divine agencies. Hermes provides him with a protective herb and instructions as to how to behave with Circe; and Circe in her turn, being half-divine, advises him as to how to escape from the lure of the Sirens and to avoid destruction from Scylla and Charybdis. In addition, Odysseus is always ready and willing to heed the words of his patron Goddess Athene.

The first three Books of the *Aeneid* make it quite clear that Aeneas is called to a special mission by the gods, and must submit to his destiny. This divine call, and Aeneas' complete dedication to the mission is the expression of the Virgilian concept of the hero. He is no longer the mighty leader of men, but a hero yielding himself humbly to his divine calling.⁹¹ The most remarkable instance of this submission is seen in his desertion of Dido at 'Jove's decree', in contradistinction to Adam's failure in a similar situation.⁹² Aeneas is also obedient to his father's advice from Hades, to other prophets and oracles at different times. His quality of leadership is seen in that his followers also, unlike those of Odysseus, obey him implicitly even under trying circumstances as during the siege. It is further noteworthy that Aeneas takes no pride in his prowess, nor even in his successful completion of the various stages of his mission,

and their conclusion.⁹³ He is not only humble and obedient in this way but clearly demonstrates that this quality belongs to the realm of the spirit.

Dante in his *Divine Comedy* definitively stresses the virtues of humility and obedience to God, which alone bring true happiness to man. The whole host of penitent souls in Purgatory are humble due to their repentance for their sin, and rest in the assurance that their silent and humble penance will finally win for them access to the circles of heaven, and the Lord's protection and presence. Beatrice reminds us that the sin of our first parents was essentially one of pride and disobedience, because of wilful aspiration. This necessitates the redemption by the Second Adam who is then to descend deeper than the height of aspiration.⁹⁴ This complete submission to the plan of redemption which involves so terrible a descent to redeem mankind stresses and underlines the virtues of utter humility and obedience. The oftquoted words "In His will is our peace" (Paradise, III) sums up the position of Dante.

Camoens' treatment of his theme seems to preclude the portrayal of such spiritual humility and obedience, though he does show the manner in which the leaders and the crew all work together in harmony for their ultimate mission. Much greater stress is however, found in Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, where we have the contrast between Rinaldo and Goffredo, both great and heroic soldiers and yet Rinaldo tends to stray from the path of obedience and humility, while Goffredo lives entirely for his task and submits himself wholly to his mission. In this respect he resembles Virgil's Aeneas,⁹⁵ thus eliminating personal as well as public problems.

Spenser has to dramatize not merely the external adventure of his knights, but also allegorize their interior conflicts in the various Books of the *Faerie Queene*. Hence the total submission that we find in an Aeneas or in a Goffredo is not possible under his pattern of the epic. The knights such as the Red Cross Knight, Sir Guyon and others are therefore, shown as beset by not merely opposition and trials from without but also passions and vices within. But Spenser does show that in spite of their weaknesses and failures they are ultimately redeemed and sanctified by the help of Prince Arthur who represents the Grace of God. One noteworthy feature of this scheme is that Spenser attempts to co-ordinate the classical

concept of Aristotle's Golden Mean with the Redemptive pattern of Christianity. The opposing elements and vices are disobedient to 'right reason', and not having the spirit of true humility are always defeated. Thus Spenser presents the need for the spiritual virtues of humility and obedience in a fresh way.

4. Faith

While the Homeric concept of heroism includes the acceptance of the nature of the universe and the presence and intervention of the gods in human affairs, it fails to provide for the purely spiritual virtue of faith. Oracles and prophecies are used, and the statement of the gods are sometimes presented, and in general these are always accepted and followed. But such a procedure does not really include the quality of faith. In the *Odyssey* the protagonist has a belief in the gods—in particular in Zeus and Athene who offer him patronage and protection. But this also falls short of the virtue of faith. At the best Odysseus' faith is intellectual in character and exigent in employment.

Aeneas on the other hand shows a very human struggle to attain the full virtue of faith. The first five Books of the *Aeneid*, show his internal (mental and spiritual) wavering and conflict before he finally unites his will with that of his Fate or mission in Book VI. This final yielding to his mission is greatly aided and strengthened by his 'visions' in the underworld, and the prophecies of the Sybil at Cumae. So much so that even when most of his ships are lost, and his mission seems to end in failure, he is able still to hold to his faith in his mission saying:

You have known worse; this also God will end.

(*Aeneid* I, 99)⁹⁶

Once he has reached this level of faith, Aeneas does not falter, and what is even more admirable is that his faith is in no way influenced by motives of reward in the next world, but purely based on his own moral and spiritual qualities.

The great Christian epic *The Divine Comedy* is permeated by the quality of faith. It is the foundation on which the epic is built. More specifically, we have Dante placing those in despair—the opposite of faith—at the bottom of the Inferno since they are guilty of the

greatest of sins.⁹⁷ On the other hand the souls in Purgatory are described as singing songs of prayer which are an affirmation of their faith. The faith of Dante himself is affirmed in that he passes unscathed through the circles of Hell, and up the slopes of the mountain of Purgatory and has his final vision of the lofty circles of heaven far above him, clothed in celestial and everlasting light. That experience is the culmination of his faith.

In spite of the grand vision of the unification of the continents of Africa and Asia with Europe through the propagation of the Christian Faith, faith as a heroic virtue is not really stressed in *Os Lusíadas*. While there is no doubt at all that da Gama and his men believe in the superiority of the Christian faith as a religion, the stress in the epic itself is not on the power of faith as a virtue of heroism, but on the power of the nation—the Portuguese as agents in a great mission to change the world: "Portugal alone keeps up the fight" for the Cross. The driving motivation is therefore faith in Portugal as a nation with a mission,⁹⁸ not spiritual faith as we would wish to find it.

Tasso's as has already been pointed out is an epic not only of an external crusade but an internal one. In the external action, we find that Solimano, one of the most heroic of men, singularly lacking in guile and treachery, and brave and valiant to a fault is yet defeated simply because he is an infidel, and does not embrace the Christian faith. The backsliding of Rinaldo leads the Sage to warn him that he can win the prize only if he turns his thoughts to heaven. Goffredo proves his spiritual superiority to Rinaldo through his utter trust in God. He is therefore chosen by God as the leader of the forces of God, and is accepted by them because he is "full of zeal and faith."⁹⁹ Tasso's framework, like Dante's then includes the basis of faith as a major aspect of heroism.

Book I of the *Faerie Queene* itself is enough to show that Spenser placed the heroic virtue of faith foremost on his list as primary to his whole scheme. The Red Cross Knight is the champion of faith, and rides out to succour Una (Truth) and her parents who are immured by a dragon. But before he can fulfill his mission he falls into a series of adventures; he overcomes error, but falls a victim to the machination of Archimago, and is lured away by Duessa (Falsehood), and overcome by Orgoglio, till he is succoured by

Prince Arthur and restored to faith in the House of Holiness. One of the most memorable of the adventures is his meeting with Despair who almost persuades the knight to suicide through his false rhetoric. He is finally enabled to defeat the dragon and fulfill his mission. The *Faerie Queene* rightly places Faith in a primary position as an aspect of heroism, "for without its sanction there could be no virtue at all."¹⁰⁰

5. Resistance to Temptations

In Homer's *Iliad* the scope for this particular type of Moral or Spiritual heroism is not evident; but in the *Odyssey*, there is more scope for temptation at any rate. Several of the obstacles that Odysseus encounters on his ten years' journey are indeed temptations but they are of two particular types. There are the simple temptations of lust offered by Circe, Calypso and Nausicaa, which he cannot be said to overcome, for he yields to the first two by satisfying Circe and Calypso for a time, and obtains from them help to set out further. He escapes from the blandishments of Nausicaa through his flattery and courteous behaviour. But these temptations also offer something more. Calypso offers immortality, but Odysseus is far too engrossed in the variety and spice of earthly life to desire it. The Sirens seem to offer glory and knowledge, but he has been warned that they may be spurious offers and hence he successfully resists them.¹⁰¹ There is the lure of the unknown as when he enters the cave of Polyphemos, and the difficulties that he encounters as a result, and his descent to Hades which again confirms his desire to enjoy life on this earth. The temptations which the son of Laertes is confronted with are more intellectual than moral or spiritual, since the type of heroism of which he is the embodiment is also intellectual rather than otherwise.¹⁰²

The greatest temptation that Aeneas is confronted with is his love for Queen Dido and her intense passion for him in return, in Book IV of the *Aeneid*. The hero here has to choose between the allurements of not merely ease and luxury, as well as love and settled life but the honour and glory of ruling as king of Carthage, a great kingdom. The personal struggle within him is no easy one, and Virgil uses that noble simile of the huge oak in the Alps assailed by violent North winds continuing to hold out in spite of losing its leaves and even its branches in the struggle to remain standing

(IV, 441 ff). It is such a struggle that overtakes Aeneas before he can tear himself away from the Queen in submission to his mission and the will of the gods. This is indeed a victory of the spirit over the flesh and the mind, and ultimately Aeneas emerges greatly strengthened by his resolution, though saddened at heart and deeply overcome by grief.¹⁰³

The absolute necessity of overcoming temptation is brought out by Dante in several different ways. Those who fail to resist are consigned to Hell like the hapless Paolo and Francesca. Souls in Purgatory are still subject to temptation in their upward journey along the desert shores along with the visitors Virgil and Dante. These souls momentarily forget their situation, but being alerted to their danger by Cato, turn away from it. Again a further temptation by Satan himself is represented as overcome through hymns and prayers addressed to God, seeking his grace. It is only thus that they are enabled to proceed on their upward course. As a purely Christian poet, Dante's portrayal of the necessity of resistance to temptation is not surprising.

Os Lusíadas does not present resistance to temptation as a major theme in the epic, though we do have the minor role of Ismeno as a tempter. But we have much more in Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, due to the episode of Rinaldo's infatuation for Armida. He succumbs to the temptation of her beauty and romantic love. This is definitely shown as a failing in Rinaldo, and it is the efforts of the two knights and the Sage that are able to redeem him. The Sage represents human wisdom in the service of Christian virtue, saving a sensitive soul from vice and unmanly dalliance, and restores him to moral virtue.¹⁰⁴ Through this episode we are led to the idea that man's natural powers are inadequate in certain cases of temptation, and that the grace of God is necessary even if it is given through human agencies.

In the *Faerie Queene* every one of the knights is assailed by temptations of various kinds, though they all stem from the same source, the Devil or Satan.¹⁰⁵ The nature of man makes him liable to temptation, glorious knights though they may be, and they often succumb to those particular vices that appeal especially to them. Sir Guyon (Temperance) is tempted by Mammon in Book II for instance, and we have seen how Duessa and Acrasia use false love as

a temptation. More typical may be the temptation of the Red Cross Knight to spiritual Pride and to Despair. In every case, of course, we find that in spite of the dire straits to which the knights are reduced, it is ultimately Prince Arthur, the Divine Grace that enables them to overcome the temptations or recover their strength and continue their quest with ultimate success.

6. Patience

Patience or patient endurance of hardship and suffering as a spiritual virtue is not to be found among the heroes of the *Iliad*, where the mood is rather one of fiery spirits in conflict. In the *Odyssey*, one of the great qualities that Odysseus exhibits is that of endurance, since he has to undergo a series of the most trying situations. The greatest trial of his patience is shown in his sojourn with Calypso for seven years, pining for his wife and his homeland from which he seems to be cut off. Equally heroic is Penelope's waiting for her husband for twenty long years, in spite of the constant importunity of her suitors. Another very striking instance of patient self-control is Odysseus' entering his own palace as a beggar, unrecognized and unhonoured, on the other hand abused and ill-treated in his own home. It is his patient bidding of his time that enables him to succeed single-handed against the host of suitors, with the help of Athene. Such patience cannot be achieved merely by reason, but must contain some element of the control of the spirit as well.

"Aeneas is the type of leader that Stoicism provided the Roman Empire."¹⁰⁶ The epic is a series of sufferings and losses. Beginning with the destruction of Troy, and the loss of his wife, in almost every country he lands he suffers further loss. He has to abandon Dido after perhaps the most pleasant experience of the whole voyage; his father Anchises dies in Sicily. Thus it seems as though he loses all that he loves, his city and his dearest ones:

Much was he tossed on land and sea...much he also
suffered in war.¹⁰⁷

Yet Aeneas is never disheartened in spite of his real sorrow and grief at the loss of men and ships, as well as of his loved ones. He remains steadfast to his purpose, patient and submissive to the will of the gods, enduring all the ills that life can heap upon him. This

would have been impossible without the strength of the spirit that underlies true patience and endurance.

Dante portrays two kinds of suffering: that of those confined in hell, where the damned suffer torment for their sins and resent their punishment; and that of the souls in Purgatory who suffer because they wish to suffer as penance for their sins, and purgation of their souls. In such suffering lies their hope; souls like that of Arnaut Daniel are unwilling to escape from their suffering:

Then dived he back into that fire which refines them.¹⁰⁸

Here patience and endurance are shown with a new power and purpose, as leading not merely to hope but to an assurance of final victory in the attainment of Bliss in heaven. Since Dante does not refer to life on earth except obliquely we find that his presentation of patience and endurance are purely spiritual.

Camoens' epic *Os Lusíadas* again greatly stresses the quality of patience and endurance, but in trials on the earth in pursuit of their grand aim. Vasco da Gama is indeed the personification of patience and endurance, steadfast courage against all odds, all hazards, natural and human that he meets in his long drawn out task.

By sea how many storms, how many harms,
Death in how many sev'ral fashions drest!
By land how many frauds, how many alarms,
Under how many wants sunk and opprest!¹⁰⁹

Os Lusíadas follows the tradition of the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* in depicting difficulty after difficulty, and problem after problem, such as the human hazard to the whole expedition due to the taking on of a pilot at Mozambique who proved to be a traitor. Da Gama's heroism lies in his steadfastness of purpose, added by strength of spirit and his patient endurance of every obstacle and setback during his journey.

Jerusalem Delivered again depicts the patient endurance of hardships in both the crusaders as a whole as well as in individuals. Most significant of course are the sufferings and patience of Goffredo, which mark him out as a leader par excellence. The very opening lines of the epic harbinger the portrayal of such patience:

And in that glorious war much suffered he...
 His soldiers wild, to brawls and mutinies prest,
 Reduced he to peace;¹¹⁰

There is no doubt that Christian epics give a special place to patient suffering since it was a pattern of the suffering of Christ himself. Long-suffering is one of the virtues that is expected of the Christian, and it is no surprise to find its emphasis in these Christian epics.

Though Spenser does not include long-suffering as one of the virtues that he plans to deal with, the quests of every one of his knights include a basis of suffering which they must endure. Patience and suffering in the *Faerie Queene* are almost taken for granted whether it is wandering in the woods of error, or lying in the dungeons of Orgoglio. We know too that Spenser as a man himself underwent untold suffering in his own life, which he bore most patiently. It is possible that Spenser therefore took suffering as a virtue for granted.

7. Repentance

Repentance again is a purely Christian concept and one does not expect to find it in epic poems where action is predominant. It is not merely feeling sorry for one's evil deeds but also the resolution to turn away from them.

Thus we cannot really consider Achilles' remorse for his wrong and unwise actions as spiritual repentance. Yet it is to be noted that Achilles does undergo a change of heart in Book XIX where he feels sorry for his quarrel with Agamemnon, and again at the end of the epic where he recovers from his battle-madness, and shows himself penitent for having insulted the body of Hector (after the gods have expressed their disapproval) and returns the body to the suppliant king Priam. The stress in Homer would rather be that the decencies of life, martial and civil should be revered,¹¹¹ and hence Achilles abides by the social order acceptable in his age. No such repentance is found in *The Odyssey*.

Aeneas does feel remorse for some of the actions that he commits — his abandonment of Dido, and his merciless slaughter of Turnus and his followers. But in the general trend of events, he does so little under his own volition, and so much in obedience to

the divine will, that he has really nothing to repent of in the truest sense. Hence in the major part of the epic there is little stress on this virtue.

Again it is Dante, in the *Divine Comedy* that has some positive position to offer. As Dante did earlier so he manages here also to make a distinction between the attitude of those in Hell as against those in Purgatory. The souls in Hell are those who would not or could not repent of their sins and misdeeds, while in Purgatory are the penitent and therefore the redeemable. Since Christianity places stress on sin and redemption therefrom, it is clear that in a doctrinal epic such as the *Divine Comedy* there should be a clear stand on this virtue. The hope of bliss in Heaven is only open to those souls that have already repented and have been forgiven, or those who are repentant and are now working out their salvation through the penances of Purgatory.

As in the case of the *Iliad*, while we have instances of heroes feeling guilty or sorry or remorseful for their shortcomings and failures, stress is not laid upon repentance as a virtue in *Os Lusíadas*, *Jerusalem Delivered* and *The Faerie Queene*.

8. Chastity

There is considerable difference in the attitude toward chastity even between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Though Helen earned the sobriquet 'of Troy', she was the wife of the Greek Menelaus, and was prepared to return to him after her ten years of life with Paris. With typical feminine wilfulness she still seems to hesitate between the two.¹¹² Other examples in the *Iliad* also show that the virtue of chastity did not receive great attention—conjugal or otherwise—during the early period of history.

In the *Odyssey*, however, we have Penelope, the Homeric archetype of the faithful wife,¹¹³ who waited for her husband, despite the pressure from local suitors for no less than twenty years. She is a devotee of Artemis the Greek Goddess of chastity, and her integrity of character is praised by no less a hero than Agamemnon, whose adulterous wife Clytemnestra murdered him on his return from Troy. In the *Odyssey* we not only have this contrast between Clytemnestra and Penelope, but we also find that Helen herself is a

chastened and modest wife.¹¹⁴ Female chastity then has by the time of this epic grown in importance. Another noteworthy feature that we find is that Penelope finds her husband possessed of every virtue and good quality, and was the noblest among the Achaeans.¹¹⁵ A chaste woman would certainly consider her husband the best in every sphere. This strikes a familiar chord in those who are familiar with Indian tradition. Male chastity, however, does not rise to the same height. Odysseus is unfaithful to Penelope at various times during his adventures, sometimes no doubt out of necessity in the hope of escape, and ultimate return to his wife. The sojourn with Circe and Calypso comes to mind. Yet he constantly praises Penelope, has faith in her fidelity, and steadfastly endeavours to return to her.

Though relationships and marriages are to be found in the *Aeneid*, as well as in *Os Lusíadas* and *Jerusalem Delivered*, we do not have the same depth of treatment of the virtue of chastity in any of these.

But the Courtly Love of the romances did have their impact on both Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and the *Faerie Queene*. The pattern of courtly love is discredited by Dante as sinful in the wellknown episode of Paolo and Francesca. Dante makes Francesca the opposite of Beatrice and contrasts their subsequent fate. Francesca is condemned to everlasting death and damnation, tied to her lover, while Beatrice is one of the Blest. Dante also upholds chastity in other examples such as Matelda, whom we find in the Paradiso. Hence Dante has been termed "a moral realist, always subordinating pathos to ethos"¹¹⁶ and upholding the virtue of chastity as an aspect of religious heroism. He was probably influenced largely by the practice of celibacy in the religious orders of his time, and the fact that the great saints had all embraced celibacy.

In this Spenser's *Faerie Queene* differs from the *Divine Comedy*, for Spenser leans more to the romantic side of courtly love, though he still maintains the primary importance of chastity. Spenser goes to the extent of creating a Lady as one of his knights, Britomart representing the virtue of chastity. But Spenser's concept of chastity does not include religious celibacy in his scheme. Chastity to escape the snare of the world does not present an ideal to him. He is on the side of a fruitful virginity; but "there is to be no sex without

marriage.”¹¹⁷ Naturally, adulterous or promiscuous love is condemned as in the episode of Acrasia, or that of Paridel and Hellenore, who is a woman with no inhibitions. In contrast we have Britomart who represents ‘ideal love, serene, controlled and fructifying’. Her love for Artegall is clearly portrayed and she is united with him in the end. Britomart does not merely extol or defend a personal chastity as we find in Milton’s *Comus*, “but champions, advances, and represents chastity as an active and beneficent principle.”¹¹⁸ It is this active quality of Britomart that makes her a Lady Knight. Spenser’s epic thus portrays the virtue of chastity with certain extensions of meaning and significance.

9. Charity

This spiritual quality received a great impetus only after the advent of Christianity in Europe, and hence it is not easy to identify it in the earlier epics. It may, however, be equated to some extent with man’s concern for his near and dear ones, his friends and comrades, and finally for his countrymen or his society. Love of humanity as a more general principle is not found in the *Iliad*. Achilles for instance loves his friends “because he needs their adoration.”¹¹⁹ Each of the chieftains shows some concern for his own men, and their equipment and privileges. Charity is not generally equated with mere comradeship or friendliness, though this quality is found among the Greek heroes. Diomedes is kindly disposed and rushes to the rescue of the aged Nestor, when his horse is struck down, whereas Odysseus rides on!¹²⁰ On the Trojan side Hector shows a leader-like concern for his family, as well as for his people.

In the *Odyssey* charity may be said to be limited to Odysseus’ love of his homeland, his wife, his son and faithful retainers. Though he is courteous and friendly in most situations, this is really due to his concern for himself, not for those he is associating with. Hospitality may be included as an aspect of charity, a gesture to the stranger. King Alcinous and Queen Arete are extremely kind and considerate to Odysseus. Penelope in Ithaca perhaps overdoes the hospitality which is expected of the mistress of a large palace. The rule of hospitality was certainly one that was known and practised in Homeric times.

As we have already noticed, *pietas*¹²¹ is the dominant virtue in Aeneas, and this quality seems to include much of what may be

brought under the head of charity. His love for his dear ones, his wife and father is to be noted; and his agony of parting from Dido in Carthage also comes under this head. He is concerned for his men and for his companions; so much so that he is prepared to settle by single combat the quarrel between himself and Turnus, rather than that there should be much slaughter. A still higher form of his love expresses itself when he grants a truce to the clashing forces when they wish for it:

Peace for the dead and slain in war you ask.

I'd grant it gladly to the living too. (*Aeneid* XI, 110-11)¹²²

Aeneas' sense of concern is, therefore, of a higher level of morality than the Homeric. The controversy over his slaying of Turnus¹²³ who begs for mercy is based on whether this is a blot in an otherwise blameless character, or whether he deliberately has to forego his natural humane character to carry out the will of the gods. This is to be inferred from his momentary hesitation in performing the act. It may also be construed as something that he owed to his comrades and fellowmen—a duty to be performed as a leader and agent of higher powers, not on his own initiative. His general concern for the divine will, or an expression of the love of the soul for its Maker, though not yet *agape* anticipates the Christian ideal. That it falls short may easily be inferred from the fact that Dante denied Virgil entry even to the vision of heaven, and replaced him as a guide by Beatrice. The truly spiritual quality of charity, as mentioned earlier is a Christian concept.

It is natural then to look for this virtue in the *Divine Comedy*, for Dante is the greatest of the Christian epic writers. Here he makes a very clear distinction; for he assigns his characters to Hell, Purgatory or to Heaven in accordance with what he judges to be their display of charity, and its opposite self-love. All those who are still conscious and cling to their selfish passions are definitely incapable of the bliss of heaven, and are therefore in Hell. Those who have, however, consciously willed to disown such selfish passions but are unable to dissociate themselves from them, are consigned to Purgatory where they achieve progress in the growth of the spirit, through penance and the help of God's grace. They make themselves worthy of heaven and salvation by degrees, by developing the love of God which is the main form of charity. Those who have

attained bliss are those who have demonstrated their development in charity on earth. Thus Dante portrays the highest form of Christian love or *agape*, as crucial for man's redemption and attainment of heaven.

The main thrust of *Os Lusíadas* is military and political rather than religious.¹²⁴ Camoens brings in the new concept of discovery and unity of all mankind—all the continents are to become one through the spread of communications and of Christianity. But Camoens has based his hero on Aeneas: "Gama...who robs the wandering Trojan of his fame,"¹²⁵ and he conforms to the heroic ideal in a new way:

Those (and those Worthies onely) will I sing,
Who their dear lives have ventur'd and laid down,
First for their God, and after for their king;¹²⁶

Gama and his men display a high ideal of comradeship, and patriotism, sacrificing their lives for the mission assigned to them by their king in the service of a further concept of the oneness of all mankind in Christianity. But the main action of the epic does not stress the moral and spiritual, and hence a high degree of charity is not to be found in it.

Similarly in *Jerusalem Delivered*, though the ostensible theme is a Crusade to release the holy places of Christianity from the hands of the Moslems, the very use of the theme of war has precluded to a great extent the stress that is laid on charity. Tancredi twice offers mercy to Argante. Solimano the infidel is so tender that he weeps for the death of his soldier Lesbino and is for a moment unable to continue the fight.¹²⁷ Such instances of comradeship and compassion are found in abundance, while the love of God is seen only in the overall theme, and does not dominate the epic.

Spenser who deals more specifically with virtues naturally has to find more space for a treatment of the great Christian virtue of charity. He does not do so in any single Book but spreads the theme over all his virtues, showing the all embracing nature of true *agape*. In Book I we have the relationship of Holiness with Truth as against the opposition of the sins of pride and falsehood, etc. Most noteworthy however, is his fuller treatment of different aspects of charity in the Books on Friendship, Justice and Courtesy. No

less are the Books on Temperance and Chastity imbued with the concept of Charity or *agape*. One of the problems that Spenser faced was the prevalence of the concept of Courtly Love which did not measure up to the Christian standards of Spenser. It is as a counterblast to the Courtly Love that Spenser uses two Books, those on Temperance and Chastity, where even love is shown to have its limits, especially in its desire for pleasure. As we have seen Spenser's concept of Chastity is that of purity in fulfilment as against celibacy. Love of the body must find concord with love of the soul, i.e., *eros* must be sublimated to *agape*. Then in Book IV he can pass to the true love of soul for soul, the truest, most intense and unshakeable love relationship possible to mankind. Such love we find in the case of Cambel and Triamond:

so love of soule doth love of bodie passe,
No lesse than perfect gold surmounts the meanest brasse.

(*Faerie Queene* IV, IX, 2)¹²⁸

Thus far he deals with individuals. But when he comes to a more general consideration he includes the wider concept of charity under what he calls *Justice*, the most sacred of the social virtues. Here again he chooses the Aristotelian mean between complete permissiveness and rigid discipline, permeated by a love of man i.e., humaneness, and in the spirit developed through a love of God, Charity. The law when tempered by mercy becomes justice without prejudice to the pattern of the hierarchical order. A further aspect of Charity is found in the treatment of Courtesy, drawn again from the reigning concepts of medieval chivalry but tempered with the Christian ideal. *Courtesy*, therefore, has been endowed with spiritual connotations. It so far exceeds polite etiquette as to include "the special loving generosity of God and our Lord". Sir Calidore and even more completely Prince Arthur embody this virtue to the loftiest extent. It is ultimately the virtue exhibited by Christ himself, the loving and selfless generosity that binds man to man, and man to God. This is the atmosphere necessary, this is the root from which all spiritual fruits grow.¹²⁹ Charity is thus seen as greater than any single virtue, since it is all-embracing, including that magnanimity and magnificence in the spiritual sense that finds its ultimate expression in Christ.

Conclusion

In surveying the patterns of heroism in the European tradition, then, we find a growth in the concepts of heroism with the growth and development of Western civilization. The divisions into Martial heroism, Intellectual heroism, and Moral and Spiritual heroism mark the main steps in this development. It should be noted, however, that almost all the characteristics outlined here find some place in the epic themes and examples that we have chosen as representative. It is not in the mere restriction that the change occurs but in the inclusion of higher and loftier ideals as civilization develops.

In the Homeric ethos, the prevalent pattern is martial heroism in the *Iliad*, with its emphasis on the glory of battle prowess with the concomitants that have necessarily to go with it. The world of violence in action and in passion is most clearly seen in the *Iliad*, while the *Odyssey* presents a different set of vices and virtues, and hence a different and superior group of characteristics as heroic. The general pattern is from purely martial heroism to an emphasis on intellectual ability, knowledge and ingenious strategy. *This progression starts* then, as H.V. Routh has rightly pointed out, *the line of Intellectual heroism in the European epic tradition*.¹³⁰

The conflicts in the *Aeneid* are not so much concerned with the pull between action and emotion, or problem and evasion, as in the Homeric themes, but move into a slightly loftier sphere—the struggle between earthly passions and the will of heaven. Aeneas is a sensitive soul, subject very much to passions as we are, and confronted with decisions that seem to break his heart. He sees his city and home destroyed, his wife dead, and he is forced into exile but that exile is turned into a mission, the mission to found the city and ultimately the Empire of Rome. The agonising experience of abandoning the hope of earthly pleasure and security in the love of Dido, the terrible loneliness and sense of loss when his ships and men are lost in the storm, his father's death in Sicily, and then the unexpected and violent opposition he meets in Italy, the promised land of the divine will, make this epic an almost continual conflict between passion and spirit, between the pull of the earth and the pull of heaven. The hero's doubts and uncertainties, his heart-sorrow and nostalgic pathos make him a very different hero to Achilles, Hector and

Agamemnon. The concept of the heroic has indeed changed, and the hero's submission to his mission and the will of the gods is predominant, though there seems to be that classical element of fatalism about it too.

The grandeur of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, both in conception and execution has made it one of the greatest of epics, for this grandeur includes a lofty spiritual quality that was never there before. While the other epics deal with the life of man in this world, Dante dares to look upon the life of man after his passing from this earth making a grand tour of Hell, Purgatory and the verge of Heaven. It is noteworthy that by this means Dante is enabled to meet personages historical as well as literary, and draw on experience that has been real as well as imaginary. But the viewpoint has been changed from that of this mundane world to 'a God's-eye view' of life in terms of Christian theology and spiritual quality. So that while Dante surveys all the qualities we have identified, he is able to categorize them more systematically than any other epic poet. The major theme is of course that postlapsarian man is unable of his own will to attain the bliss of heaven without the aid of the grace of God, through the redemptive power of His Son. The perspective presented is almost wholly moral and spiritual.

The epics of Camoens and Tasso are of quite a different calibre: Camoens sets his epic pattern on a voyage—a real voyage like that undertaken by earlier epic heroes such as Odysseus and Aeneas, but brings it up to date by featuring da Gama's voyage to the Indies; Tasso takes as his theme the Crusades for the deliverance of the holy city of Jerusalem, using in addition an allegoric framework to show that to reach the Holy city on earth, one has also to reach the City of God in Heaven in a more individual and personal manner. The allegory is of the crusade of the Human soul, as well as of Christendom against the Moslem world. Both these epics, however, do not reach the depths probed already by Dante, although they do yield some material for the use of Milton.

Milton claimed that Spenser was his original and it seems a strange saying to us today, for Spenser sets his epic in Faerie Land, not the real earth but in a chivalric world of his own creation. Spenser further sets out as a Protestant to present not merely the Christian virtues, but those virtues from this particular viewpoint.

Spenser was as much a believer in tradition as T.S. Eliot, for he seemed to write as though all that had gone before was present to him at the time of writing. He drew from Plato and Aristotle, from the *Iliad*, and the *Odyssey*, from the Renaissance epics of Dante, and Tasso, and from the Romances of Medieval Chivalry, *Orlando Furioso* and the Arthurian cycle. His eclecticism must have struck Milton, his attempt to bring together all the wealth of knowledge, philosophy, religion, and then history of his time, was impressive. Yet he confined himself to define and present the virtues—the Aristotelian virtues combined with the Christian virtues—in a new way, combining Chivalric adventure with moral and historical allegory. This was a great achievement.

Milton, with his encyclopædic knowledge, was long choosing his subject for his epic. He too had ranged through all history and philosophy, he too had been more than familiar with the literature of the Classical age and of the Renaissance, he too had undergone and participated in the historical events of his own day, but his insight had taken him not to the imaginary world of Spenserian romance, or the world after the close of life in this world as in Dante. He flew to the prime cause of the nature of man, and chose for his theme the double theme of the fall; the fall of Satan from heaven resulting in the fall of man from the state of Paradise. *Milton's epic is indeed an evidence of his use of the great epic tradition, but with the inspiration of his individual talent.* Like Dante his vision probes the darkness visible of Hell, the prelapsarian beauty of paradise, and the glory of heaven, and like Dante too, he is close to doctrinal Christianity as is evident from the very titles of his epics, *Paradise Lost*, and *Paradise Regained*.

THREE

TAMIL EPIC TRADITION
INHERITED BY KAMBAN

Cilappathikāram by Prince Ilango Adigal and *Manimēkalai* by Seethalaichāttanār are taken as representative of the earliest Tamil epic tradition. *Jeevakacinthāmani* by Thiruthakka Thēvar is taken to represent the Jain epic tradition which flourished in Tamil literature between the fifth and the tenth centuries A.D. These three epics are here considered as constituting the Tamil epic tradition which Kamban inherited.

MARTIAL HEROISM

1. Physical fortitude

Kannaki the principal character of *Cilappathikāram* is not portrayed as using her physical fortitude to get over her predicament. Her act of consigning the city of Madura to flames is not achieved by virtue of her physical strength but through her spiritual strength begotten of moral rectitude viz., chastity.

The poet Ilango Adigal following the *Puram* tradition of the Sangam works and *Tolkāppiyam*, devotes a full canto (*Cil* 26) to describe wars.¹ Depiction of wars and battles, whether real or feigned is an important characteristic of epic poetry. In keeping with such poetic tradition, the poet portrays Senguttuvan, the Chera

king as waging wars against the kings of the North in which he subdues all opposition. Kanaka and Vijaya, two of his chief opponents are made to carry the stone hewn out of the Himalayas for the purpose of carving an image of Kannaki.

Since Senguttuvan is shown victorious, his action partakes of martial heroism. But this is only apparent, for a true warrior hero is one who shows his physical prowess in personal combats with his opponents. Senguttuvan is not portrayed as engaged in such personal combat. It is only his army that does the fighting. Moreover Senguttuvan is not the principal character in *Cilappathikāram*.

Then why does he go on the expedition to the Himalayas? The King himself declares the reason for his expedition:

If the king of high mountains...does not give us the stone needed to carve an image of the great Lady of chastity, then we, ...shall demonstrate to those... (*Cil* 25:126-130)²

The last two lines of the 28th canto drive home the poet's view of the aim and end of Senguttuvan's military expedition:

The lion of kings who brought all north India under his control thus performed the ceremony of consecration (Kadavunmangalam) and commanded the conduct of worship from day to day by sacrificial offerings and other festivities. (*Cil* 28: 233-234)³

Cilappathikāram thus subordinates the military heroism of Senguttuvan to the moral and spiritual heroism exemplified by Kannaki, the heroine of the epic.

Manimēkalai describes how Manimēkalai, the heroine raises herself to the stature of a saint by virtue of her moral and spiritual qualities. She renounces the worldly life even as she is very young and becomes a Buddhist nun. The main theme being the propagation of the ideals of Buddhism,⁴ the epic action of *Manimēkalai* does not involve the use of physical prowess or martial heroism. Conflicts, if any, are depicted as internal, involving passions and virtues rather than swords and axes or bows and arrows.

By showing that Kattiyānkāran uses martial prowess to wrest the throne which does not belong to him, *Jeevakacinthāmani* dis-

credits such aspect of heroism and shows it defeated in the end. Prince Jeevaka uses his battle prowess to recapture his father's throne from the fraudulent minister. The poet approves of Jeevaka's military action since he is the lawful heir to the throne, whereas Kattiyankāran is an usurper. *Jeevakacinthāmani* values therefore, the use of physical force in relation to its use: it is good if put to virtuous use; it is condemnable if directed towards evil ends. The poet makes this clear when he explains the victory of Jeevaka as follows:

The sword does not fail the virtuous, while weapons betray
the vicious. Even a leaf becomes a spear for the good.
The evil-minded are, therefore, never victorious. (JC 815)⁵

2. Pride

There is no depiction of pride as an aspect of heroic character in *Cilappathikāram*. Even the invincible Senguttuvan who has subdued the Chola and Pandiya kings of Tamilnad and who has successfully led two military expeditions to the North, does not seem to suffer from this defect, although he is conscious of his military superiority over other kings of his time. Nor do *Manimēkalai* and *Jeevakacinthāmani* portrays this aspect of heroism.

3. Disobedience

Kōvalan disrupts the domestic order by deserting his wife and living with Mādhavi, the courtesan. The poet suggests this when he says that Kōvalan is so infatuated with Mādhavi that he cannot part from her and thus entirely forgets his unsullied home and wife. To what great an extent the domestic order is disrupted by Kōvalan is expressed by Kannaki at a later stage:

I could not give charity to observers of *dharma*, or honour
Brahmins, receive saints and ascetics or entertain guests as
befits our great family... (Cil 16: 71-73)⁶

Kannaki feels that she has lost all these duties of a true householder because of her husband's disruption of the order. *Cilappathikāram* thus shows disobedience to the order of one's society as upsetting the domestic harmony.

The Pandiya king orders Kōvalan to be executed for having allegedly stolen one of the royal anklets. Trial should have preceded

the punishment. The king fails in his duty by believing the goldsmith as to the identity of the thief. The king thus disrupts Justice by ignoring the accepted judicial practice.⁷ By showing that such disruption causes the destruction of the city of Madura, Ilango Adigal portrays disobedience in an unfavourable light.

Disobedience is portrayed in *Manimēkalai* as violating an order to which one is yoked by birth or situation. Udayakumaran's refusal to accept the advice of the goddess (7: 8-14) not to follow *Manimēkalai* is contrary to the order of a king. His resolute decision to capture *Manimēkalai* knowing well that it may provoke his own father's (the king) anger, is an explicit act of disobedience. Showing that such acts of disobedience bring about one's fall, *Manimēkalai* rejects this aspect of character as unheroic. *Jeevakacīnthāmani* does not portray disobedience as an aspect of heroic pattern.

4. Inordinate passions

(a) Lust

Kōvalan exhibits intense love for Kannaki when he praises her in the following words of prattling endearment:

O purest gold! O conch-white pearl!
O faultless fragrance! O Sugar-cane, honey!

.....

Shall I say that you are nectar not produced from the Sea?

(*Cil* 2: 73-79)⁸

It is this self-same Kōvalan, we find in the next canto, in Mādhavi's chamber, where captivated by her charms he forgets himself and his home.

Critics like Dr. Chidambaramanathan Chettiar are of the opinion that Kōvalan's infatuation for Mādhavi is due to his over-enthusiasm for art.⁹ Intensely emotional as he is, Kōvalan finds her company very much to his aesthetic satisfaction. His propensity to lose himself in things of artistic beauty is evidenced in his returning to Kannaki and Kavunthi Adigal at the outskirts of the city of Madura forgetting the purpose of finding a lodge for himself and Kannaki.¹⁰ The poet reinforces this impression by comparing Kōvalan to the summer breeze that visits all the flowery places in the company of summer bees.

Kōvalan is swayed by passions and emotions rather than by reason. It is in keeping with such character that he forsakes Mādhavi also abruptly for no fault of hers. In both the cases the results are disastrous. By deserting Kannaki, he loses his wealth and glory. In parting from Mādhavi he leaves his home-town for Madura where he is killed as a thief. *Cilappathikāram* shows through the portrayal of Kōvalan that passions should not be allowed to dominate reason, and that art or love of art should be subordinated to a life of virtue and not vice versa.¹¹

Udayakumaran in *Manimēkalai* sets his passionate eyes on Manimēkalai, the heroine. He does not listen to Cuthamathi, a friend of the heroine, who advises him against his irrational pursuit nor does he pay any heed to the goddess Manimēkalai who says:

O prince, ...desist from your passion for her who has taken to the life of a nun. (MM 7: 13-14)¹²

He so burns in lust that he decides to capture Manimēkalai who assumes the form of Kāyacandikai to evade the prince. But he persists in his attempt and gets killed by Kāncanan, the husband of Kāyacandikai. Inordinate lust is thus depicted in *Manimēkalai* as causing destruction to the body itself which seeks unworthy gratification.

Sachandan, the king loses his throne to his minister through his passionate love for his wife. It is a ruling passion with him. Vijaya, the queen of the dethroned king points out this defect in her husband as the root-cause of his fall, and advised her son, Jeevaka the hero of the epic to desist from such ruinous passion (JC 2609-2613). *Jeevakacinthāmani* thus depicts lust as a tragic passion by the example of Sachandan.¹³

(b) Anger

Kannaki in *Cilappathikāram* burns in anger engendered by the unjust execution of her husband. She seeks audience with the unjust king. The palace-guard terribly afraid of her fiery appearance reports to the king:

A woman is waiting at the gate. She is not Korravai,...
She is not Kali, who dwells in the darkest forests inhabited by

ghosts and imps. Neither is she the goddess who pierced the chest of the mighty Daruka. She seems filled with a mad fury, suffused with rage. (Cil 20: 30-41)¹⁴

She proves to him that her husband is innocent. Realizing his grave injustice the king drops down dead. Kannaki's rage still burns unabated. She burns down the city that unjustly killed her husband.

Though Kannaki's anger is justifiable as a righteous rage, anger is evil, a negative trait. She herself seems to be aware of it when she says: "I will not join my husband until I shed this burning anger" (Cil 19: 70). She is to join her husband in the world of spirits. An angry soul in a world of spirits is quite out of place. That is why the patron goddess of Madura tells her that she would meet her husband only in the form of an angel and that could happen only after fourteen days.

Cilappathikāram thus portrays anger as a negative quality to be shunned, and by applying this to the heroine, otherwise morally excellent, and detaining her spiritual bliss for sometime on that score, it shows anger as an undesirable aspect of heroism.

Manimēkalai and *Jeevakacinthāmani*, however, do not portray anger as an aspect of the heroic pattern.

(c) Vengeance

Anger is a desire of revenge.¹⁵ Kannaki's words to the Pandiya Queen show her spirit of revenge:

If I too belong to that count of chaste wives, I cannot allow your city to survive... I have destroyed its King; I must destroy the city also. You shall soon enough understand what I mean.

(Cil 21: 35-38)¹⁶

Her vow to destroy the city becomes true. She avenges her husband's unjust death. When briefed by the patron goddess of the city about Kōvalan's past deeds, Kannaki laments that she has gone too far (Cil 23: 191-192). By making her realize and overcome her vindictive passion and delaying till that time her joining Kōvalan in spirit, the poet shows that passion for vengeance is an undesirable aspect of heroic action.

Manimēkalai does not portray the spirit of revenge as applied to its major characters. As a momentary and light passion, vengeance is depicted in a minor character. The mother of Udayakumaran is so grieved at the news of her son's death, that she wreaks vengeance upon Manimēkalai by administering to her some poisonous medicine to make her mad, by setting a ruffian upon her to molest her and by shutting her up in a dark room without food (MM 23: 39-60). When Manimēkalai is able to thwart all her schemes, the Queen falls at her feet and begs her pardon. Thus the spirit of revenge is shown in unfavourable light in *Manimēkalai*.

(d) *Passion for power and glory*

Jeevakacinthāmani does not depict vengeance as an aspect of heroic action. It portrays on the other hand the passion for power and glory. Kattiyankāran exhibits ambition for power. It is to satisfy this lust which he has been nourishing for a long period, that he repays his king's faith in him by his treacherous usurpation of the throne. By portraying him as defeated by Prince Jeevaka, *Jeevakacinthāmani* condemns such passion for power and glory.

5. Uxoriousness

Cilappathikāram shows that the Pandiya king's overfondness for his wife disturbs his sense of judicial responsibility in disposing of the case brought by the goldsmith. His judgment is clouded in that it involves his wife's anklets and that he decides it on his way to his wife's apartments to dispel her sulking. He thus allows his passion to overpower his ability to discharge public duties and consequently he orders the alleged thief to be executed without trial. But *Manimēkalai* and *Jeevakacinthāmani* do not depict this aspect of character as applied to their protagonists.

6. Self-love

Self-love is not portrayed in *Cilappathikāram* even as a trait of character to be rejected. Self-love in terms of caring for one's own welfare in furtherance of which one does not hesitate to spoil others' interests does not find depiction in *Manimēkalai*. Apart from such material concern, one's efforts at purifying his own soul by becoming a 'sanyasin' in total disregard of one's legitimate duties in the world may also be called self-love, though of a high

type. Āputtiran in *Manimēkalai* is portrayed as nourishing this type of self-love. His minister discourages Āputtiran by saying:

If you now in your selfish love of attaining heavenly bliss
leave this country, all will suffer and die. (*MM* 25:112-115)

Undeterred by this advice, he reaches Manipallavam where he reveals his mind to Manimēkalai that he wishes to be with her rather than return to rule his country. The Buddhist nun dissuades him saying:

the best form of following the path of virtue is to feed and
clothe the people who are under your yoke. It does not
behave a king to renounce his royal duties in exchange
for a hermit's life. (*MM* 25:225-231)

Āputtiran is convinced and returns to his country. Self-love, even if its aim is to attain one's salvation, is thus discouraged in *Manimēkalai*.

There is no portrayal of self-love in *Jeevakacinhāmani*. Jeevaka's renunciation of the world at the end is not shown as a result of his self-love. It is rather portrayed as an ideal culmination of his earthly life, a kind of spiritual heroism recommended by *Tolkāppiyam*, the earliest extant work on Tamil poetics.¹⁷

INTELLECTUAL HEROISM

1. Vain wisdom

The royal goldsmith's knowledge of thieves and their *modus operandi* is complete. When the city guards hesitate to execute the order of the Pandiya king on the grounds that Kōvalan does not look like a thief, the goldsmith explains at length the eight ways that thieves employ to deceive their innocent victims (*Cil* 16:165-202). He uses such vast knowledge only to cover his own theft and to bring about the murder of an innocent man. As such this knowledge becomes 'sapience', or "vain wisdom", and hence is applied to a character whom the epic disapprovingly describes as "a messenger of Death", "the murderous goldsmith", "a treacherous person", etc. (*Cil* 16: 115, 125, 165).

There is no portrayal of "vain wisdom" as an aspect of Intellectual heroism, in the other two epics.

2. Deceitfulness

(a) Dishonesty

To cover his own theft the goldsmith lies to the king that he has found the thief who has stolen the queen's anklet. He lies to Kōvalan that the guards have come to inspect the anklet with a view to buying it. He deceives the guards that Kōvalan is the thief to be executed. Thus *Cilappathikāram* shows him to be a master liar and condemns him through the words of the Pandiya king as a dishonest deceiver.

Rācamādēvi in *Manimēkalai* lies even to her husband the king when she says:

Udayakumaran, our son has gone astray by setting his eyes on Manimēkalai. As a beautiful young lady of virtue, she does not deserve imprisonment. (MM 23: 21-30)

for she gets Manimēkalai released only to persecute her. Though she says that Manimēkalai is free to stay with her in the palace or to go her way feeding the poor, the Queen does not mean it. She takes her to the palace and harasses her in several ways. Thus the Queen is portrayed as dishonest and deceitful.

(b) Disguise

Assuming the shape of an earthly woman the goddess Manimēkalai spirits away the heroine to Manipallavam in order to save her not only from Udayakumaran's lustful pursuit but also from her unconscious interest in him (MM 10: 42-49). Manimēkalai the heroine also resorts to use of disguise. First she assumes the shape of Kāyacandikai to escape from the attention of Udayakumaran. Secondly, she transforms herself into a man to discomfit the Queen's plot of setting a rogue upon her to molest her modesty. Thirdly, she disguises herself as an ascetic so as to enable herself to meet and discuss religious truth with the respective religious heads. Prince Jeevaka disguises himself as an old Brahmin to win the hand of Suramanjari. It is interesting to note that disguise is made use of in *Manimēkalai* and *Jeevakacinthāmani* not to deceive anybody but to help the cause of the good and the virtuous. *Cilappathikāram* on the other hand does not portray disguise and stratagems as applied to any of its major characters.

(c) Stratagem

Kattiyankāran deceives the king into believing him to be an honest friend and minister. Once he wins the confidence of the

king in the form of his request to look after the royal duties, Kattiyankāran usurps the throne through dishonest and deceitful means (JC 261-265). He resorts to tricks and stratagems to do away with prince Jeevaka, but the strategy ends in his own ruin.

Prince Jeevaka is also portrayed as resorting to tricks and strategies to recapture his throne from the enemy advised, of course, by his mother (JC 1922-1928). Accordingly the prince and his uncle devise a strategy of the wedding contest to which Kattiyankāran is invited, and killed. It is a strange and unique example in the annals of *epic heroism* in Tamil that a hero resorts to a cunning stratagem to resolve his problem. It is more or less Odyssean in character.¹⁸ Apart from the royal mother, some modern scholars also support Jeevaka's means of victory.¹⁹

The poet, however, seems to disapprove of this when he makes the hero himself remorsefully recall that he has snatched the throne from Kattiyankāran by virtue of his strength and strategy, and that such might and glory could be better discarded in preference to a higher form of glory, viz., spiritual bliss (JC 2726-2729).

3. Rhetoric

The goldsmith persuades the executioners to kill Kōvalan. His powers of rhetoric are so compelling that one of the guards starts giving additional proofs to his list of the tricks of thieves. As a final thrust of argument, he reminds them of the king's displeasure should they fail to carry out his order. All on a sudden a drunken guard hews Kōvalan into two!

Citrāpathi uses her powers of persuasion so successfully that Udayakumaran succumbs to her inducement to capture Manimēkalai. His attempt ends in his own death. Both *Cilappathikāram* and *Manimēkalai* show how rhetoric is used for evil purposes and thus reject it as an undesirable aspect of heroism. *Jeevakacinthāmani* does not portray this aspect.

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL HEROISM

1. Moral and Spiritual valour

Kōvalan's feat of rescuing an old Brahmin from the clutches of a furious elephant is praised by Mādalan as 'compassionate

heroism' (*Cil* 15: 53). Similarly Prince Jeevaka relieves Guna-mālai from the grip of a must elephant (*JC* 973-985). Both these heroes do not harm the beasts while saving the human beings. Jeevaka puts his skill in archery to a good use when he saves the cattle from the hunters without killing any of them (*JC* 449-454). Both Kōvalan and Jeevaka are thus portrayed as using their physical prowess for saving their fellowmen and hence it is considered as moral valour. Their sense of kindness even for the cruel elephants and Jeevaka's mastery in archery so as not to harm the cattle-lifters are pointers to the Jain concept of Ahimsa.

There is no portrayal of moral and spiritual valour in *Manimēkalai* since the heroine is a nun whose mission consists chiefly in practising and preaching the principles of Buddhism.²⁰

2. True wisdom

Kōvalan's knowledge of art is not used wisely in that he does not realize the relative values of art and life, and so unwisely subordinates life to art. Mādhavi, the "talaikkōl" artist of Pukār makes use of her art to please Kōvalan i.e., to her, art is a means to life. But when she comes to know of his tragic end, she not only gives up the life of an artist and becomes a nun, but also makes her daughter Manimēkalai do the same.²¹ The epic shows that Mādhavi's wisdom consists in her appropriate decision as to the place of art in her life when Kōvalan is no more to enjoy it. Her knowledge of art has become wisdom of life.

Learning from her mother of the misfortunes that befell her father and step-mother Kannaki, Manimēkalai realizes the futility of this earthly life. Employing the ephemeral to earn the eternal is a mark of wisdom.²² This is what she does and this is how she explains her becoming a nun, to Udayakumaran:

Having realized that this body is subject to birth, ageing,
disease and death, I took to this virtuous life of a nun.

(*MM* 18: 136-139)

Another aspect of her wisdom is that she uses her knowledge to guide others also to a life of virtue. She advises Udayakumaran against his lustful pursuits. The instructions she receives from

Deevathilaka and Aravana Adigal she not only translates into action, but also imparts to others, as when she advises Āputtiran:

I have not known any other virtue better than feeding
the poor and clothing the naked. (MM 25: 228-231)

As a Buddhist evangelist she helps people to extricate themselves from the cycle of Karma without, however, advising the principle of life-negation. Thus Manimēkalai puts her knowledge to a better and virtuous use.

Jeevakacinthāmani portrays Jeevaka as proficient in multifarious arts such as archery, music, the art of make-up, curing snake bites, art of bedecking, art of using mantras, etc. Every branch of knowledge he puts to better uses of moral and spiritual significance. He makes the best use of his mother's advice (JC 2609-2626) by renouncing the "love-torn" and "gong-tormented" world of passions in preference to one of spiritual bliss (JC 2726-2729). Thus *Jeevakacinthāmani* portrays him as a man of moral and spiritual wisdom.

3. Humility and Obedience

Kannaki, the heroine is all humility; she pays respectful obeisance to her in-laws whenever they visit her. As a chaste wife she never says 'no' to anything her husband may say or do. When he asks her to follow him to Madura, she obeys him without a murmur. Kōvalan ruefully appreciates this act of her obedience later (Cil 16:67-70).

She is however, portrayed as disobedient wherever it goes against her principles of chastity. She rejects her friend's suggestion to worship the God of Love for the early return of her husband. She deserts these virtues and asserts herself when her husband is put to death as a thief. *Cilappathikāram* thus portrays humility and obedience as associate aspects of chastity.

Manimēkalai humbly obeys her mother Mādhavi by becoming a nun. In spite of her bewitching beauty (MM 3: 23-25) Manimēkalai is never proud of her charms. She is ready to be guided by the goddess of her name and Deevathilaka. She pays her reverential obeisance to Aravana Adigal, a kind of Jain Tiresias, a counterpart to the Māḍalan of *Cilappathikāram* who seems to 'see' all and 'know' all. She obeys his instructions by taking on herself the service of feeding the poor.

Manimēkalai's obedience is not however, a meek submission to anything. She obeys her mother, but not her grandmother who wants her to be a *danseuse*. She humbly bows down to Udayakumaran, but advises him against pursuing her and avoids him through disguise. So *Manimēkalai* portrays its heroine as humble and obedient with the proviso that it does not go against her principles of virtue. It is through such virtuous obedience that Manimēkalai attains the heroic stature as the saviour of men at the moral and social level,²³ and as the enlightened Buddhist nun at the spiritual level.²⁴

In spite of his excellences in many walks of life, Jeevaka is depicted as humble and obedient. He obeys his mother by carrying out her instructions as to how to deal with the enemy. He controls his anger and desists from attacking the king's soldiers in obedience to his teacher's command not to rise against the king before the opportune moment comes (*JC* 1090). He obeys his foster-parents by agreeing to be taken to his enemy, Kattiyankāran. Obedience is not, however, portrayed as the forte of Jeevaka, the hero.

4. Faith

Kannaki, Manimēkalai and Jeevaka are shown to have deep faith in their respective orders. Kannaki has complete faith in the domestic order. In spite of her husband's prolonged stay with Mādhavi, she believes in him and that is why she rejects her friend's suggestion to pray for his return. It is her faith in Kōvalan's goodness that makes her simply follow him to Madura. It is her firm faith in the virtue of her chastity that gives her necessary moral strength to disobey and dislodge the king of an alien country.

Manimēkalai shows deep faith in the life of a nun by accepting it. Her obedience to the angels and Aravana Adigal is an expression of her faith in the Order of Buddhism. She believes in 'Panchashil' (five virtues) which constitutes her moral faith.²⁵ She believes in the theory of "Karma" and rebirth which forms her spiritual faith (*MM* 21: 142-143). It is this latter which recommends her to Aravana Adigal to initiate her into "tapasya" leading to her elevation to the Order, and this is what makes her heroism moral as well as spiritual.

Jeevaka's belief in the Jain theory of "Karma" is borne out by his precepts to the hermits at Chitrakūdam (*JC* 1421-1437). His advice to a wayfarer testifies to his faith in the Order of Jainism in general (1542-1556). His recovery of the cattle without any bloodshed, his saving of Gunamālai without killing the elephant, his advice to a hunter to abstain from killing animals for meat (1233-36) and his rescuing of a herd of elephants from a forest conflagration (1237) prove his faith in "Ahimsa", a cardinal virtue of Jainism. His own renunciation of the world attests to his faith in the efficacy of the Order. Jeevaka is thus portrayed as "a Jain to the core."²⁶

5. Resistance to temptations

Artistic excellences in the form of Mādhavi tempt Kōvalan and he yields to such temptation which results in the loss of his glory and wealth. The poet makes him later repent the lapse. Impervious to such temptations any more, Kōvalan successfully resists the temptation of a forest nymph on his way to Madura (*Cil* 11: 192-200).

Udayakumaran's advances constitute the major temptation for Manimēkalai. She feels that her heart responds to his love despite her knowledge that he considers her as one of the common women of easy virtue. She resists this spontaneous inner response by her conscious reasoning and wisdom.²⁷ The external aspect of this temptation represented by his persistent attempts and those of her grandmother, she is able to resist by virtue of her faith in her mission, assisted, of course, by her guardian angel and the great Aravana Adigal.²⁸

In spite of his marrying many ladies Jeevaka is not lustful. He is able to resist the temptation of lust. This is borne out from his rejection of the lustful advances of Anangamāveenai, wife of Pavathathan (*JC* 1579-1585).²⁹

6. Patience

Faith in an order or system enables one to endure the buffets of fortune and the ills of life that the flesh is heir to. Kannaki's deep faith gives her strength to patiently endure her misery of separation without complaining. She endures likewise the hazards of the journey to Madura on foot. Kavunthi Adigal's sympathetic

praise for Kannaki on this score is an expression of the contemporary approbation of this virtue. By making Kōvalan himself praise her for her patient suffering, the poet shows that Kannaki wins her husband back not only in terms of physical proximity, but to his emotional and mental harmony as well. While *Cilappathikāram* thus portrays patience as a heroic virtue *Manimēkalai* and *Jeevakacinthāmani* do not portray this aspect.

7. Repentance

Kōvalan repents of his desertion of Kannaki and of making her take the strenuous journey to Madura. The Pandiya king's repentance for his injustice to Kōvalan is so poignant that he dies of it. Of Kannaki's repentance the poet sings:

There, under the kinos in bloom,
Kannaki wept and lamented: "Alas,
I am guilty of a great crime." (*Cil* 23: 191-192)³⁰

The poet approvingly shows that through repentance Kōvalan recaptures his lost glory, the king maintains justice and Kannaki is able to shed her pride and anger, and becomes a deity.

Apart from the Queen's repentance for her persecution of *Manimēkalai*, there is no major portrayal of this virtue in *Manimēkalai*. *Jeevakacinthāmani* does not depict this aspect of heroic pattern, either.

8. Chastity

Female chastity as depicted in *Cilappathikāram* is so comprehensive as to include besides conjugal fidelity aspects like humility and obedience, faith, patience, love for her husband, simplicity in his absence, worshipping no god but him, and choosing not to survive him. A verse in *Jeevakacinthāmani* (1598) beautifully sums up most of these constituents of chastity, even though chastity in *Jeevakacinthāmani* is not of any thematic import.

Kannaki's conjugal fidelity is, like most of the Indian heroines, unquestionable. Aspects like humility, obedience, faith and patience have already been discussed.

Kannaki shows her love for Kōvalan by patiently enduring his absence and by obeying his wishes and looking after his physical comforts when he stays with her.

Not to visit temples in the absence of one's husband is an aspect of chastity exemplified by Kannaki. Her polite refusal to pray for Kōvalan's return from Mādhavi is an expression of this aspect. Not to bedeck herself with flowers, cosmetics and ornaments is another aspect of Kannaki's chastity. This constituent of chastity, a love-motif perhaps, is also portrayed in *Jeevakacinthāmani* and *Kambarāmāyanam*.³¹

Not to survive the husband is another constituent of chastity represented by the Pandiya Queen in *Cilappatikāram* who breathes her last the moment the king swoons to death, and by Āthirai in *Manimēkalai* who plunges herself into fire on hearing her husband's reported death. This aspect is styled as "Āriya Karpu" meaning "serene chastity".

Kannaki does not represent this type of chastity. Her husband's death as a thief imposes on her a duty to reclaim his honour. The sun-god's witness to the innocence of Kōvalan and her "resurrected" husband's words that she should stay behind sharpen and strengthen her purpose. The shy, patient and obedient wife flares up in righteous anger; meets the unjust king; proves the innocence of her husband; makes the king himself declare this, and in vengeance burns down the city. Critics prefer to call this kind of Kannaki's ferocious aspect of chastity "Ceeriya Karpu", meaning "fiery fidelity." This is Kannaki's heroic achievement.

Her repentance for her overplay of passions, and her realization that it is only according to the great Design, Fate that Kōvalan dies as a thief; the king deviates from justice and the city of Madura is burnt up, and that she is only a tool in the hands of the Design, make her shed her ego. Her last words as a human being show her self-conquest:

Alas, I am a great sinner.

(*Cil* 23:192)³²

This is her spiritual victory. When she appears next towards the end of the epic she makes her final speech which shows her transformation:

The Pandiyan is blameless. He is now a good guest in the palace of the king of gods. I am his daughter.

(*Cil* 29: 72-73)³³

Her vision is no more cloudy. She has reached a level whereat the differences in terms of one's actions and results blur and disappear and the identity is no more physical, nor casuistic, not even moral, but only spiritual.³⁴

In her efforts to overcome her peculiar predicament Kannaki represents a pattern of heroism begotten of her chastity, a pattern which has a dual dimension, moral and spiritual, not collateral but evolutionary in nature.

9. Charity

Kōvalan is kind and sympathetic to human beings at large. He saves an old Brahmin from the clutches of a cruel elephant. He offers his life in exchange for that of a criminal, and when this is declined, he takes care of the maintenance of the criminal's mother for the rest of her life.

Kannaki is so interested in receiving guests, sages and religious people that Kōvalan does not get, according to some critics,³⁵ sufficient attention from his wife and hence seeks the company of Mādhavi. Her plea to Kavunthi Adigal to pardon the scandalous remarks of some libertines on her way to Madura, and her order to the god of Fire not to harm anyone but the wicked and the vicious are instances of her charitable acts at the moral level. Her recantation that the Pandiya king is blameless and she is his daughter in heaven is the expression of her charity at the spiritual level, for "To err is human, to forgive, divine". Āputtiran's love for his fellowmen is utterly selfless. He begs for food from door to door and feeds with it the needy and the poor. He satisfies his hunger with what is left over. Goddess Chinta Devi's gift for him, a Divine Bowl is a divine recognition of his acts of charity. His decline of the offer of boons by God Indira is an expression of his love of selfless service to humanity. In terms of Indian aesthetics, Āputtiran's aspect of heroism both as a giver and as one who refuses to receive from others, may be called "Dāna-vīram", according to Hēmādri.³⁶ According to a Sangam poet such refusal is far superior (heroic) to giving away prizes, alms and boons.³⁷ When marooned in Manipallavam he throws the Bowl into a pond and dies through fasting. His last words that the Bowl should reach the hands of one who is all love for living beings and who is interested in feeding them, speak for his charity at the trans-species level.

That the Bowl of Āputtiran reaches the hands of Manimēkalai marks her out as a person dedicated to charity. She takes on the duty of feeding the hungry. She requests the king to release the prisoners and transform the prison into a charity house. She forgives the Queen who persecutes her in several ways, and advises her to lead a virtuous life. The fact that the recipients of her kindness are mostly the discarded ones – the blind, the deaf and dumb, the wounded, orphans, diseased, mendicants, the hungry, supinely lethargic, destitutes, etc. – not to speak of the various kinds of animals and birds reveals to us the magnitude of her charity and the magnanimity of her soul. If Kannaki's forte of heroism is her chastity, Manimēkalai's speciality of heroism is her saintly charity in the fullest sense of the term.

Jeevaka shows his gratitude by suitably rewarding his friends and relatives who have helped him in reclaiming his throne. His mother shows her sense of charity by transforming the cemetery where he was born, into a charity home. His sympathetic guidance to a wayfarer, a hunter and the hermits at Chitrakūdam speaks of his love for human beings in general. Jeevaka's acts of moral charity reach the zenith when he takes pity on the wives of his enemy, Kattiyankāran whom he has killed in the battle. Allaying their fears as to their fate Jeevaka generously allows them either to live "in the palace with as many comforts as they had hitherto enjoyed" or to take "as much wealth as they desired"³⁹ and live in a place of their choice. It is interesting to note here the difference of the cultural ambience of the Greeks of the *Iliad* who fight with each other and fall out on the question of sharing the wives of their dead enemies in the name of *geras* or honour.³⁹

Jeevaka's saving a herd of elephants from a forest conflagration and his succour to a dog on the point of dying are cases in point revealing a higher form of charity which transcends the limits of human kind and becomes one of spiritual brotherhood with all life. His determination to renounce the world after having lived in it for thirty long years with eight wives, in pursuit of "Eternal Bliss" speaks of his spiritual courage and wisdom.⁴⁰ His trans-species charity has now become transcendental charity or *agape*, love of God.

Conclusion

Of the three Tamil epics under discussion *Cilappathikāram* has got several "firsts" in the annals of Tamil epic poetry. It is not only the first epic poem in Tamil but also the first epic in Indian literature,⁴¹ perhaps in world literature too, which portrays a woman – not even a royal personage, but an ordinary middle class citizen – as its chief protagonist. There is, therefore, no hero in *Cilappathikāram*, there is only a "heroine", where "heroine" does not mean the wife of a hero, but merely marks the change of gender.* *Manimēkalai* which follows *Cilappathikāram* in time also depicts female heroism in its heroine Manimēkalai. European literature was to evolve such a concept of heroism only in the fourteenth century when Boccaccio "introduced decisively women as heroines of the flesh as well as of the spirit".⁴²

Naturally then, these "twin epics" of female heroism, which is in tune with the spirit of Indian epics of which the apotheosis of womanhood is an important characteristic⁴³, do not portray martial heroism. Even where war is depicted as an epic aesthetic it is shown to be subservient to moral or spiritual heroism. While *Cilappathikāram* glorifies the virtue of chastity as the dominant aspect of Kannaki's heroism, *Manimēkalai* depicts the virtue of charity exemplified by the heroine who becomes a saint to serve the society. This has again the sanction of Indian aesthetic tradition. While *Cilappathikāram* describes a saint as a hero,⁴⁴ Sanskrit poetics glorifies him as "a Mahāvira" (a great hero).⁴⁵

Whereas the first Tamil epic depicts the deification of Kannaki on account of her domestic virtue viz., chastity, the second epic *Manimēkalai* heroizes Manimēkalai as an embodiment of charity, a social virtue par excellence, and elevates her to sainthood.

We could see the continuation of the moral and spiritual emphasis of heroism in *Jeevakacinthāmani* also which followed the twin epics. Though it is the story of a king, the male protagonist Prince Jeevaka in *Jeevakacinthāmani* does not have much

* (a) "A woman can be a "hero" in the same sense as a man, and in such cases "heroine" merely marks the change of gender."

--R.R. Bolgar, "Hero or Anti-Hero?" in *Concepts*, p. 142, n. 1.

(b) "The hero, therefore, is the man or woman . . ."

--Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 24.

to do with military heroism. In spite of his celebrated skill in archery King Jeevaka always subordinates his martial prowess to his cherished principles of Jain Dharma. Aspects of intellectual heroism do have some role but still they are in the service of moral and spiritual purposes. King Jeevaka's renunciation after a virtuous earthly life is the ideal of human evolution – an ideal also glorified by *Manimēkalai* where the heroine renounces the world in the prime of her life – that is depicted in *Jeevakacinthāmani*.

When Kamban came to compose his immortal epic *Kambarāmāyanam* towards the end of ninth century A.D., he could happily inherit a tradition where martial and intellectual patterns of heroism are already transcended and, moral and spiritual aspects of heroism came to be upheld as the ideal pattern of epic heroism.

Such a rich literary tradition of the Tamils which Kamban came to possess did not, however, preclude him from drawing on the tradition of the Pan-Indian culture, both social and literary. The cultural mosaic of the Tamils was already shot with the stories of the great Indian epics, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhāratha*. Sanskrit being the language of art and religion for a number of centuries of course, along with Tamil, the principles of Indian aesthetics were not unfamiliar to the scholars and poets of Tamilnad. Even though we have no viable evidence to establish Kamban's proficiency in Sanskrit, he seems to have clearly felt the popularity of Valmiki's epic all over the land. Kamban not only knows about this, but is also all admiration and reverence for Valmiki. He says explicitly therefore that he follows Valmiki as far as the raw material is concerned, and that his attempt is in Tamil.⁴⁶

Numerous references to the saga of Rama in the Sangam classics and in the hymns of Ālwārs,⁴⁷ and several references to the story of the *Mahābhāratha* in pre-Kamban Tamil literature besides the Tamil version of the story by Perunthēvanār, speak for the fact that the tradition of the great Indian epics has already been assimilated into the Tamil epic tradition. This is why we have not included a separate survey of the Pan-Indian epic tradition which Kamban inherited, as we have done in relation to Milton's inheritance of the European tradition.

FOUR

MARTIAL HEROISM IN THE EPICS OF
MILTON AND KAMBAN

Milton had before him, as we have seen earlier, three kinds of heroic tradition to follow: the Classical, the Renaissance and the English. In keeping with the natural law of amelioration, each tradition tried to improve upon its predecessor. Even the same author tries to improve his later work upon his earlier one. Homer, for example, shows this tendency in the *Odyssey* demonstrating the inadequacy of the physical force before the powers of intellect. Virgil in a similar vein, subordinates *fortezza* (strength of the body and mind) to *pietas* in his famous national epic, the *Aeneid*. Going a step further, Camoens and Tasso composed their epic poems wherein the concept of a nation is transcended and a broader notion of Christendom is depicted, whereas Dante's epic crossed the realms of the body and the mind to translate the action to the world of spirits. No less progressive and original is "our sage and serious" Spenser who portrays the successful odyssey of the twelve moral virtues through the realms of vices before they accomplish their quests.

It is at this point that Milton came to compose his epic. His epic tradition offered him a wide range of heroic ethos; physical

fortitude, prudence, leadership, love, piety and magnanimity. Of all these, the epic tradition had laid emphasis on military valour. Renaissance ethics on the other hand, had condemned this ideal, and favoured moral and spiritual heroism in its place. After long choosing Milton decided to depict

...the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom
Unsung (PL IX, 31-33)

Milton chose this heroic 'ethos' as the subject matter of his epic in deliberate preference to, "Wars, hitherto the only argument Heroic deemed." This shows that

Milton is not very much in love with martial heroism. He feels that glorification of daring adventures, heroic exploits and hair-breadth escapes is a remnant of the past; it is antiquated.¹

It may be seen that each of these epics has been revising the concept of heroism in consonance with its social ethos. They kept, however, the epic mode of presentation unaltered. That is, though these epics gradually turned away from the concept of martial heroism to that of a 'higher heroism' in many cases 'Christian heroism', they retained the martial code of the narrative structure which was essentially classical. This incompatibility of the heroic norm with the heroic virtues is one of the tensions, which, in the opinion of John M. Steadman, confronted the Renaissance epic poets.²

Renaissance poets like Tasso tried to resolve this tension by adopting the mode of allegory. They effectively portrayed the combat of the virtues and vices through the traditional symbol of a military warfare. Spenser's method of full-fledged allegory succeeded in accommodating a pattern of ideas to a pattern of incidents by fusing ethical structure with narrative structure. His treatment of such ideas as nobility, war, honour and passion, is, however, ambivalent, oscillating between orthodox, classical ideals of heroism and radical modifications of them.³ The use of allegory came under heavy fire of Renaissance criticism on moral grounds as well as on grounds of poetic theory. The chivalrous romance itself which mostly employed the technique of allegory was censured

as "open man-slaughter and bold bawdrye". Moreover, the allegorical mode was better suited to the narrative method of the romances than to the plot structure of epics composed on the classical model. It is the vehicle rather than the tenor, the critics argued, that attracted the reader who swallowed the *dulce* rather than the *utile*, the sweet rather than the useful.⁴ It is in this vein that Milton himself had to incur the censure of later critics for his allegory of Sin and Death. So Renaissance poets had been "long choosing" for an appropriate mode of representing their new concepts of heroic virtues.

Milton resolved this crux by continuing to employ the martial code of the classical epic for the narrative structure of his poem. By doing so he satisfies the conventional epic norms and thus prevents the taunts of the orthodox classicists. But the conventional epic formula of *fortezza* did not suit his epic subject of "better fortitude of patience and heroic martyrdom." The heroisms of flesh and spirit are at variance. Milton circumvents this difficulty by applying the conventional heroics to Satan and his crew, the infernal machinery of the epic. Milton's distaste for war and physical fortitude is thus happily realized when he depicts the devil and his followers as representing the conventional type of martial heroism.

1. Physical fortitude

In the epic tradition fortitude had long been the conventional heroic norm. It served as the normal standard for evaluating or comparing heroes of different cultures or nations.⁵ In keeping with such tradition Milton portrays the physical strength of Satan and his followers. The first physical attribute of Satan is the tremendous size of his body which

extended long and large
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareos or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream: (PL I, 195-202)

Satan's shield and spear, which suggest the enormity of his physical prowess invite our attention next. The 'ponderous' shield is compared to the largest round object human eyes had ever seen, the moon seen through Galileo's telescope (I, 284-291). His spear is so gigantic that even the tallest pine tree used for the mast of a great flagship seems but a wand in comparison (I, 292-294). Apart from his personal strength, Satan has a considerable number of followers whose strength "distends his heart with pride". The size of Satan's army is so vast that all the heroes and armies that ever were assembled were no more than pygmies in comparison with them. In sheer might, the fallen angels surpass the most famous heroes of epic and romance:

for never since created man,
Met such embodied force, as named with these
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes:...Thus for these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess,...

(PL I, 573-588)

Milton has invested the devil and his followers with such enormous physical prowess not to glamourize his fortitude but only to hold it up to ridicule. In keeping with the code of conventional heroics he depicts Satan as waging impious war with God in Heaven. Milton makes it clear that Satan's rebellion is due to his 'envy against the Son of God' whom He had 'exalted' as Messiah, by 'right of merit'. Not willing to pay 'knee-tribute' to the Son, and to cast off the yoke, Satan rebelled against God and tempted one third of Heaven's host to join him in his 'strife of glory'. As such, the war is unjust and 'unpious' and, Satan and his crew are therefore, hurled down into Hell by the Messiah.

The deliberations in the infernal council show that neither Satan nor any of his followers have rightly understood the cause of their spiritual fall. They ascribe their fall to the superior force of God's thunder.

so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms?

(PL I, 92-94)

They are unable to think of God in terms of spiritual qualities like love, faith and obedience. Beelzebub's grudging acceptance of God's Omnipotence is only in terms of strength:

(whom I now
Of force believe almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
(PL I, 143-145)

He concludes from their defeat that the supremacy of heaven's king is upheld by strength.⁶ The Son is aware of their line of thinking:

...since by strength
They measure all, of other excellence
Not emulous, nor care who them excels;
Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe. (PL VI, 820-823)

Satan who boasts himself as one of the 'Spirits of heaven' (II, 687) is no better in his reasoning when he says:

How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
...but still his strength concealed,
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
(PL I, 629-642)

It is an interesting stroke of dramatic irony that Satan, the archetypal user of force, accuses God as resorting to the use of force to subdue others:

who overcomes
By force, hath overcome but half his foe. (PL I, 648-649)

It is only the body, Satan thinks, not the 'unconquerable will' that could be overcome by God. The fallen angels decide, therefore on "War, open or understood". If the war in Heaven has ended in the 'sad overthrow and foul defeat' of the fallen angels, Satan's conflict with Death, where both of them 'no second stroke intend' ends in "politic compliments and the promised battle evaporates into mutual congratulations."⁷ "The king of Hell about to engage in heroic battle against a challenger to his sovereignty too quickly becomes a wily ulysses."⁸

Satan's decision to attack Man as an 'easier enterprise' and that too 'by some false guile' is "the end of the illusion of heroism in the

actions of Satan and his minions.”⁹ Both the decisions speak for the inadequacy of force or war as a means to an end. Apart from the martial defeats in Heaven and in Hell, Satan’s ignominious exit after his altercations with Gabriel in the garden of Eden speaks for the decline of his physical prowess. When Gabriel asks him to

...look up

And read thy lot in yon celestial sign

Where thou art weighed, and shown how light, and how weak,

If thou resist. The fiend looked up and knew

His mounted scale aloft: nor more; but fled

Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.

(PL IV, 1010-1015)

Not only the ‘shades of night’, but also the use of physical heroism by Satan fled with him from this point of the epic narration! No more do we see the huge monstrous size, the Leviathan-like shape of Satan, but only a ‘sly snake’, a ‘wily adder’ (IX, 613, 625) yet able to speak and tempt in Book IX, and just a hissing serpent ‘prone on its belly’ in Book X. This is how Milton depicts the fall of martial heroism to a ridiculous depth as applied to Satan, the counter-hero of *Paradise Lost*.

Satan’s principles such as “all good to me is lost; Evil be thou my guide” (PL IV, 109-110) and, “For only in destroying I find ease” (IX, 129) bear witness to the destructive nature of military valour and its cool indifference to moral issues like right or wrong. Whereas the Son makes his voyage through chaos to create Man, Satan swims across it to destroy him. Again while he finds ‘ease’ in changing Paradise into a wilderness, the Son recreates man’s paradise out of the ‘wilderness’, through suffering. Milton’s aversion to battle prowess as an aspect of heroism can be felt when he says:

For in those days might only shall be admired,

And valour and heroic virtue called;

To overcome in battle, and subdue

Nations, and bring home spoils...

Destroyers rightlier called and plagues of men.

(PL XI, 689-97)

His terms like ‘sword-law’, ‘Death’s ministers, not men’ (676), ‘destroyers’ (697) and, ‘plagues of men’ (697) speak for his distrust in and disrespect for martial heroism.

In Christ's rejection of the Parthian armies, Milton passes a judgement on the epic tradition itself and its glorification of military prowess.¹⁰ The poet is highly critical of the use and glorification of physical fortitude:

They err who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to overrun
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault:

...conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy,...

(PR III, 71-80)

Milton's allusion to almost all the famous warriors of the epic and romance, his portrayal of Satan as defeated in the end, his clear denunciation of military valour in no equivocal terms (PL XI, 689-97, PR III, 71-83), and his emphasis on 'better fortitude of patience and heroic martyrdom' (PL IX) demonstrate beyond doubt that Milton's concept of heroism is not martial but moral and spiritual. Milton thus rejects the heroic code of physical fortitude, as Samuel Butler was to do later in his *Hudibras*.¹¹

Whereas Milton had to infuse loftier forms of heroic virtues into the epic tradition that he inherited and to devise a technique of his own to accommodate the nobler heroic virtues into the traditional epic pattern, Kamban was fortunate enough to inherit a tradition which had already depicted the nobler virtues of moral and spiritual heroism. This difference is a pointer to the literary atmosphere of the respective cultures in which these great epic poets started composing their works. The fact that their epic poems have not been bettered ever since their appearance in their respective literatures is an index to their value.

Martial heroism as an epic virtue is conspicuous in the epic tradition of the Tamils by its absence. If it is subordinated to moral and spiritual pattern of heroism in *Cilappatikāram*, and *Jeevakacinthāmani*, it is totally absent in *Manimēkalai*. The story of the Rāmāyana which Kamban took up for epic treatment in Tamil offered him enough scope for depicting martial heroism..

Ravana the counter-hero, Indrajit his son and Vāli, the king of Kishkindha, are portrayed by Kamban as partaking of this type.

Like Satan, Ravana represents physical fortitude—his heroic virtue. He has acquired immense strength and invincibility and victory in war through the most severe austerities. He has also received boons to live as long as three crores of years. It is no less a person than the renowned sage Agastya who gives us a description of Ravana's might:

For untold years we have been suffering from the tyrannous rule of Ravana, who has acquired the sovereignty of the three worlds by his endless *tapas*. Who can overpower the mighty Ravana who makes the Devas flee before him...? Shiva has loaded the Rakshasas with all his blessings... while Vishnu has been often defeated by them. Brahma is able to get on with his work only by flattering them.¹²

This is what we hear about him in Book III of *Kambarāmāyanam*. When we meet him face to face in his court:

the *Vidyadhara* kings always keep their hands above their heads lest Ravana, after a chance glance, should think them not humble enough. And even when the emperor (Ravana) speaks to the maids-in-waiting, the *Siddha* kings shudder in fear and make obeisance with hands joined and heads bowed. Even Indra and the gods of rain, wind, fire and death are here dancing attendance upon Ravana.¹³

He has thus defeated almost all the gods in heaven and the kings on earth. Later in the battlefield his mighty foes like Hanuman are struck with wonder by his invincible strength. Seeing that his blow does not strike him dead, Hanuman says to Ravana:

Has thou not conquered me when thou art yet
Alive unscathed? I do commend thy strength!
Now take thy even chance.¹⁴

And when in turn Ravana strikes a blow on Hanuman's expansive chest, the latter reels at the blow. Kamban describes the effects

of Ravana's blow on Hanuman's chest as affecting the whole universe:

And when he reeled, the gods in heaven reeled,
And Dharma, Truth and Nobleness did reel,
And reeled the Vedas, Justice, Fame, and Ruth!¹⁵

Even Rama is unable to kill him in the end although he has destroyed all of Ravana's mighty associates, his son, brother and his chieftains. Rama cuts off a head of Ravana, but in a trice a fresh head springs up in its place. The poet emphasizes here the efficacy of *tapas*:

E'en as the virtuous soul that after death
Doth take its birth again in a better frame,
E'en so upon the trunk another head
Arose, its fury unforgot: is there
Among endeavours yielding golden fruit
A higher one than *tapas*?¹⁶

All these facts drive home the point that Ravana owes his strength to his severe austerities and to the gods who gave him the boons, as Satan derives his strength from God. The irony is that both Ravana and Satan oppose the very sources of their strength: Satan rebels against God and makes war in heaven on Heaven; Ravana opposes the heavenly kings and gods, captures them and, the defeated celestials wait upon him in his court while their wives serve Ravana's harem. Ravana thus rises against and defeats the very source of his strength whereas, Milton's Satan attempts such a rebellion but finds himself in Hell floating in the infernal lake with 'deep scars of thunder' on his face.

There is an interesting difference in the fact that both these counter-heroes derive their strength from their gods. For, while Ravana receives his boons by merit i.e., by performing severest austerities with perfect devotion and faith, Satan does not perform any such meritorious acts. Just by being an angel created by God, he receives his strength. God's will is his strength. He cannot do anything but God's will. Gabriel's comment makes this clear:

Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine,
Neither our own but given; what folly then
To boast what arms can do, since thine no more
Than heaven permits, nor mine,... (PL IV, 1006-1009)

There is, therefore, no wonder that Ravana has subdued all the worlds, while Satan is shown defeated throughout.

Courage in the face of heavy odds is an associate aspect of martial heroism. Not to flee the battle field, as Hector does before Achilles, is an admirable martial virtue. Satan *appears* to possess this virtue in a great measure when he infuses courage and confidence in the minds of the fallen host:

What though the field be lost?
All is not lost: the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:

(PL I, 105-108)

This is all fine, sounding like the Marlowian Tamburlaine. But Satan does not seem to mean it. For, in his only combat that he has ever after, with Gabriel, he does not choose to resist his foe, but flees 'murmuring' seeing the celestial sign showing him 'light' and 'weak'. Even in Heaven he would not have dared conflict with God, had he known God's real strength. For, he says:

...but still his strength concealed,
which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall. (PL I, 641-42)

Because he had thought Him less strong, he was 'tempted' to make the attempt. This is not courage. Courage implies fearlessness of one's death or destruction. And Satan does not want to die; he wants to rule ill or well, in Hell, if not in Heaven.

Ravana on the other hand is courageous. He admires the martial prowess of Rama. He wonders whether he is Shiva or Vishnu or Brahma; but he soon checks this train of thought and suddenly bursts out:

But be he who he may,
I will not swerve from war's straight path: I won't
Withdraw from my warrior's duty plain
...let there be victory or death:
I turn not back.¹⁷

Such is his resolve, and unlike Satan, he proves his words. Seeing him unconscious on his chariot, his charioteer drives away from Rama to the rear. Before the chariot has gone far, Ravana

recovers from his swoon but not seeing Rama before him, he realizes the charioteer's action, and is furious:

Thou hast, O villain, turned my chariot back
And made yon Rama mock my valour 'fore
The very gods!...
Thou hast by turning back the car, made me
Appear a coward.¹⁸

We see the difference here. Satan is a coward but wants to 'appear' a brave warrior. Ravana, on the other hand does not like even to 'appear' a coward. Knowing well that his end has come, he faces Rama boldly and dies a warrior's death. It is perhaps, such indomitable courage and its attendant behaviour that has earned Ravana an admirer in A. L. Basham when he makes the *Blakean* comment:

It is noteworthy that in Kamban's hands the demon Ravana frequently takes on the proportions of a heroic figure, and contrasts favourably with the rather weak and unimpressive Rama. Like Milton, Kamban was of the devil's party without knowing it.¹⁹

If unrighteousness brings about one's fall in spite of his fabulous physical strength, the very nature of one's fall illustrates the stature of a character. Death is not only inevitable it also represents the culmination of one's heroic career. The circumstances of one's heroic death are, therefore, of immense interest in that they show us how one takes his death.²⁰ Satan does not die in the common sense of the term. Rather it is he who brings death to the world of Man. His fall from the angelic heights to the infernal depths in eternal damnation is in no way laudable. From the moment he allows his angelic breast to be overcome by pride and ambition, he starts falling: from an Archangel to an Archfiend, then an adversary, then the devil and at last a snake 'on his belly prone'. His fall consists in the loss of his glory, his strength, and at last the loss of his very form. It is a most ignoble fall. How does he take it? At every step of his degradation Satan is complacent of course, after some initial outbursts. In his hellish desire for revenge, he accepts whatever form or place he is assigned. There is no splendour whatsoever about his fall. There is no glory about his 'setting'.

It is Ravana who seems to approximate to the ideal of heroic death. Though conscious of his end by the hand of Rama, he embraces his death with equanimity of mind and spirit. He dies as the powerful king of Lanka as we saw him at the beginning of his career. Kamban's description of Ravana's face at his death is illuminating:

...but the hero's face

Even at that awful moment wore a look
Of majesty, surpassing far the splendour
Even of days when saints and Rishis had
To flee for safety from his oppressive rule!²¹

We see here then the splendour which, in the words of C. M. Bowra, irradiates a hero in the hour of defeat or death, a special feature of heroic poetry.²² This is the glory of his setting, the light which shines with more than usual brightness.

What causes, then, Ravana's fall? It is his total disregard for a life of virtue. Pinning his faith on his strength which is only as we saw just now, virtue-begotten,²³ he disturbs the sages like Agastya and Viswamitra by destroying their *tapas*. It is the same misplaced trust on his physical fortitude rather than righteousness that incites him to abduct Sita—an act which is one of the deadliest sins. Thus he overreaches the limit. Boons are signs of one's happy communion with the supernatural, symbol of one's virtues. Once the virtuous powers are put to sinful use, they are bound to become ineffective. What Joseph Campbell says in regard to the fall of Jemshid, the Persian Emperor of the Golden Age, equally holds good to Ravana also:

No longer referring the boons of his reign to their transcendent source, the emperor breaks the stereoptic vision which it is his role to sustain... The upholding idea of the community is lost. Force is all that binds it. The emperor becomes the tyrant ogre... the usurper from whom the world is now to be saved.²⁴

Hence there is Rama to save the world from Ravana's tyranny, as the Son offers Himself to rid the race of Adam and Eve of the tyranny of Satan. Kamban's authorial comment on Ravana's

humiliating experience towards the end of his first encounter with Rama explains his fall:

While all the world exclaimed,
 'This is the fate of those
 Who transgress virtue!'
 His visage grew black,
 And he stood abashed
 His toes scratching meaningless lines
 Upon the ground.²⁵

How is it that his boons of invincibility have become ineffective—this, Ravana seems to be at a loss to understand. Kamban makes Rama, the upholder of virtue explain to the tyrant – ogre that martial prowess devoid of virtue cannot be victorious.

Even the gods cannot hope to win
 In fierce battles, through Might alone,
 Unless Right helps them.
 Keep this truth firmly in your mind!²⁶

Both Milton and Kamban demonstrate thus that physical prowess as an aspect of heroic action is not praiseworthy. By applying this to characters who oppose their heroes and, by showing them defeated at the end, these epic poets tend to denigrate physical fortitude as an ideal of epic heroism. War in *Paradise Lost* is not structural in function. The main action of the epic takes place in Eden where there is no war fought. The subject of the epic is *Man's disobedience* which is not physical, not even intellectual but moral and spiritual. Adam's fall is not physical but spiritual. God decrees that man will not be allowed to fall

By violence, no, for that shall be withstood. (*PL* V, 242)

And we saw just now how Satan's threat was withstood by Heaven's Scales (IV, 1010-1015). Of the twelve books of *Paradise Lost*, six are devoted to war (I, II, V, VI, XI and XII), four of them about the war in Heaven and its effects as experienced in Hell, while two at the last are apocalyptic in character. They are not structurally concerned with the main action, as the fall of Troy is not structurally concerned with the 'Wrath of Achilles'. Martial heroism is thus rejected by Milton not after giving it a trial, but by alienating it from the main action itself.

If *Paradise Lost* demonstrates the futility of war by delinking it from the main action of the epic, *Kambarāmāyanam* shows its inadequacy and inefficacy by giving it a trial in the course of the epic's main action. It seems to emphasize that valour without virtue is no valour at all; 'vicious fortitude' is bound to fail and fall, sooner or later; only the virtuous can be victorious.

2. Pride

Pride is not only one of the Seven Deadly Sins but also according to Christian theology, the original one in that the very Fall resulted from it. The credit of originality to sin then goes to Satan with whom the history of pride starts in the Universe. Satan's pride consists in his consciousness that he exists on his own in the sense of not having been created by God.²⁷ He chides Abdiel, the fervent angel:

Remember'st thou
Thy making, while the maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now;
Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised
By our own quickening power,... (PI V, 857-861)

This amounts to denying Godhead and to claim self-sufficiency which is sinful. For, "All sin is", as Arnold Williams says, "in essence, the separation of the creature from God, and this separation occurs when the creature, through pride and ambition, sets himself and his desires above the will of the Creator."²⁸ In addition to this perverted view, Satan exclaims:

Our puissance is our own, our own right hand
Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try
Who is our equal:... (PL V, 864-866)

This is clearly preposterous and blasphemous. In nourishing such a sinful idea that his strength is self-begotten, Satan puts himself in the role of a clown, a mistaker of shadow for substance and therein resides his doom.²⁹

It is through such overweening pride that Satan could not bear the sight of the Son's 'exaltation' as *Messiah*. Relying on his 'own' strength which is after all 'external', functioning at the will of God, Satan opposes the decree of God and starts the rebellion against God, and falls.

Even after his fall from heaven Satan does not learn his lesson. Even though he is aware that his pride has overthrown him, (IV, 40) he cannot retrace his steps. He disdains subjection. His rebellious pride does not allow him to return to good.

O then at last relent: is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me,... (PL IV, 79-82)

It is his obdurate pride that blinds him from seeing things in proper perspective with the result he over-estimates his strength. Even Gabriel's admonition about the futility of his strength, does not open his eyes. Finding refuge in despair rather than in God's mercy, he tempts Eve also through her 'female pride' to rebel against God's command. And Eve falls.

Eve's pride consists in disobeying Adam's wish in rejecting his 'forewarning' (X, 874-876); and in credulously yielding to Satan's wiles. Samson describes himself as fallen through 'swollen pride' (SA 532). But whereas Eve and Samson are able to return to good through pious submission and earn regeneration, Satan is not able to overcome his pride, and hence his eternal damnation. It is this relentless egocentric pride that Samuel Taylor Coleridge thinks rightly as a chief characteristic of Satan.³⁰

Ravana and Vāli also suffer from this defect. Both are proud of their physical prowess. Ravana is proud of his unlimited physical strength acquired through austerities. As we have seen earlier he has conquered both heaven and earth. Unlike Satan, Ravana has won almost all the wars he fought, except, of course, on two occasions when he was defeated by Kārthavīrya and Vāli. But his sovereignty is not affected by these defeats. His martial pride is further enhanced by the fabulous wealth of his country and by the invincible might of his allies of which Vibhishna gives a fair appraisal to Rama.³¹ It is through such prowess-begotten pride then that Ravana abducts Sita in total disregard of the principles of virtue. Vāli the mighty king of Kishkindha is no better than Ravana. Refusing to accept the imploring representations of his brother Sugriva that he did not covet the kingdom, Vāli persecutes his suppliant brother, drives him away from the kingdom and forcefully takes his wife Ruma to himself.³²

Unlike Satan, Ravana has good ministers to counsel him. Ravana considers their opinions but refuses to see eye to eye with them. When his grandfather Māliyavān, his brothers Kumbhakarna and Vibhishna, and his son Indrajit advise him at various stages of his fall to return Sita to Rama and make friends with him, Ravana flatly refuses to yield. To Vibhishna's warning that there are curses by gods³³ that the Rakshasas will be conquered by monkeys and by the race of man he retorts:

...The puny race
Of men, thou say'st, will conquer Raksha's might :...
Now who but thee can sing the power of him
Who broke the crumbled bow of Shiv, and lost
His throne by woman's guile, lost his home
By Ravana's sport?³⁴

This is not only foolish pride but also utter dishonesty. Vibhishna undeterred pressed his advice again saying that Rama is not an ordinary man, but the Supreme God incarnated as man expressly to destroy the Rakshasas. But Ravana does not listen to him and rather banishes him from Lanka.

Since he measures all opposition in terms of physical strength, he refuses to see the point of Vibhishna that it is virtue in the form of man which he is to fight against. Again he is also blind to the fact that he owes his might to the virtuous deeds he did before. This is why he underrates the might of his enemy. Even his son Indrajit is unable to dissuade Ravana from his fateful decision to fight Rama. His advice that Rama seems to me not just a human being, nor just a god, but, as Vibhishna told us, is the God, the Almighty,³⁵ does not have any effect on Ravana.

Indrajit's last words to his father reveal the reformed son and his interest in his father's welfare:

...If thou
Will conquer thy desire for Rama's spouse
And her release, they will forgive our sins,
And go from hence.³⁶

It is too much for Ravana to stomach. The mere thought of somebody forgiving him is poison to him. He is unable even to

think of giving up Sita. At the acme of his pride, therefore, Ravana replies:

My son, now unfit grown for war; I see
Confusion in thy mind; fear not the race
Of men, and worry thou no more...

Think not I counted on
The Rakshasas who are already fallen;
Think not that I did count on those who're yet
Alive: think not I hoped that thou woudst beat
My foes upon the field: in my sole right arm
I placed my trust, and I provoked this war!³⁷

This is the point of no return. His pride does not allow him to estimate properly Rama's virtuous might.³⁸ His fall is, therefore, inevitable. Vāli, equally proud of his martial prowess falls by the holy dart of Rama, too.³⁹ But with a difference. He realizes at least on the point of death that he has deviated from the path of virtue and Rama as preserver of Dharma has to destroy him.⁴⁰ He is happy to die by the hands of the God of Virtue. Kamban shows in approbation that because of such realization Vāli attains salvation,⁴¹ while it is denied to Ravana.

Pride as an aspect of martial heroism is portrayed in the epics of Milton and Kamban as causing one's fall inevitably. Satan and Ravana are so proud of their personal might that they fail to relent and hence their fall. Samson, Eve and Vāli, have their initial fall through pride, but as they relent and submit entirely to the will of God, they avoid damnation and achieve 'regeneration' or 'salvation' as the case may be. Both the epics reveal through the portrayal of pride as an aspect of heroic action that there is no intrinsic strength as such in man but what is permitted by God or Virtue and, that God is always merciful to forgive the lapses of the penitent.

3. Disobedience

Even though obedience to an Order or Scheme of things religious or social is upheld as an important virtue in all civilized cultures, it is considered as the primary virtue in Christianity. Both obedience and disobedience are, according to Christian theology, 'original'. That is to say, obedience is 'original' to all other

virtues, and all other virtues originate in it. Similarly disobedience is 'original' to all other sins, and all other sins originate in it.⁴² Hence their causal importance in Christianity.⁴³

Milton's great epic sings of 'Man's first disobedience' that has brought death and all our woe into the world, i.e., man's fall. Disobedience consists in the violation of the principles of hierarchy that govern the moral and spiritual life of the Christian world. According to this hierarchical system,

Everything except God has some natural superior; everything except unformed matter has some natural inferior. The goodness, happiness, and dignity of every being consists in obeying its natural superior and ruling its natural inferiors. When it fails in either part of its twofold task we have disease or monstrosity in the scheme of things until the peccant being is either destroyed or corrected.⁴⁴

Most of the major poems of Milton describe how disobedience causes destruction to the persons concerned and thus discredit it as an aspect of the heroic action. It is Satan again, as in the case of pride, who 'inaugurates the vice of disobedience. He disobeys God's command by refusing to obey the Son whom the Omnipotent has appointed the vicegerent and head (*PL* V, 600-615). "Fraught With envy against the Son of God", Satan thinks himself 'impaired', by the promotion of the Son over and above him. The very thought of doubting God's justness amounts to infidelity. A creature he is, his disobedience to God his natural superior upsets the Order and dislocates the Great Chain of Being. His arguments that he is 'self-begot', 'self-raised' by his own 'quickenning power' are perverse and specious. He incites his associates in the name of liberty to a rebellion against God. *Paradise Lost* shows the fruits of such disobedience by sending them to the nethermost part of Hell. Satan's disobedience consists also in setting himself above the angels, 'high on a throne of a royal state', 'exalted to that bad eminence'; he styles himself as their leader established on a throne, unenvied though, yielded with full consent (II, 19-24). For, he who rebelled against his natural superior, now rules over his natural equals, which is tyranny.⁴⁵ Thus rising against the alleged tyranny of God, Satan ends as a real tyrant himself anticipating Napoleons in the postlapsarian world. Milton emphasizes the tyrannical

character of Satan by calling him *Sultan*, the *chief*, the *general*, the *great commander* and so on.⁴⁶ I.G. MacCaffrey invites our attention to the various images like dragons, monsters, etc., employed by Milton to emphasize the rebellious nature of Satan.⁴⁷

Not limiting his violences to God and Heaven, Satan tempts the human race also by inducing Eve to disobey God's command. As a creature with the avowed principle of finding 'his sole' delight in destroying whatever is good, he disrupts the blissful order of Eden by deceptively sowing the seeds of disobedience in the heart of mankind. Thus Satan's sin of disobedience transcends the ethereal zones and transforms the terrestrial peace into temporary disorder.

Though not doctrinally codified in a single term as in Christian theology, a similar conception of a Universal Order is also of fundamental significance in the religious tenets of India. Such principles of order are usually contained in the comprehensive term of *Dharma* in India in general, and in *Aram* its equally comprehensive Tamil equivalent. Kamban's epic portrays in Ravana a rebel, like Satan. He defies and dishonours the very gods who have showered on him boons of endless strength and invincibility.⁴⁸ He refuses to comprehend that he is up against the very sources of his strength and the order of his Universe which give meaning to his life. Ravana's disruptive actions like Satan's are not limited to heaven alone. He makes a journey to Panchavati, like Satan's journey to Eden – interestingly comparable as one of the mythological elements of epic poetry – to set at nought the peaceful domestic order of Rama's idyllic life. He disrupts the domestic life of Rama by forcefully abducting Sita with lustful intentions. Even Greek society with less emphasis on female chastity could not put up with the abduction of Helen by Paris and rose against Troy. In the Indian situation where chastity is the fountain-head of feminine virtue, Ravana's act is viewed as a heinous crime. In the grip of spurious lust, he dishonours and disobeys the sane advice of his grandfather Māliyavān, his righteous brothers Kumbhakarna and Vibhishna and his invincible son, Indrajit. Satan rebels against God through pride and ambition, Ravana transgresses the path of *Dharma* through his incurable passion for Sita. Both these cultures do not tolerate violation of the principles of Hierarchy and *Dharma* as these great epics aesthetically demonstrate.

If the nineteenth century had busied itself with the character of Satan, the twentieth century with some borrowing from the eighteenth century Neo-classical critics, has spent its discerning criticism in analysing the character of the human pair. As the very opening line of the epic indicates, Milton's main concern is the disobedience of Man (Eve and Adam) and its consequences. Though *Paradise Lost* is not a straightforward Christian Doctrine nor a text-book on Christian Theology, the reader cannot evade the fact that the epic action hinges upon an order of moral causation.⁴⁹ Like the majority of the seventeenth century scholars, Milton believed in the principles of a hierarchy of being from man up to God. His is a hierarchy of virtue, of merit, and not a traditional social hierarchy of degree.⁵⁰

Adam and Eve are sufficiently instructed in this hierarchy of virtue by Raphael.⁵¹ They are also warned enough by Gabriel regarding their enemy and his intention.⁵² There is no real justification for Eve's disobeying the command of God – not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Diverse reasons are offered by critics to explain Eve's behaviour. One of them is that she is intellectually weaker than Adam and in support, Satan's reason for choosing Eve to seduce may be cited:

behold alone

The woman, opportune to all attempts,
Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
Whose higher intellectual more I shun,...

(PL IX, 480-83)

This does not, however, seem to be valid. Because, Adam is also inferior in intellectual powers to Raphael. How is he then the stronger? Moreover the "serpent" cannot be taken to mean what he says, a master of lies as he is. If intellectual superiority could "protect a creature against sin, then Lucifer would have remained secure and Abdiel fallen". So arguing Stella P. Revard rightly concludes that sufficiency is the issue, not inferiority; Eve is intellectually strong enough to withstand the temptation; and that she does not fall (disobey) through intellectual insufficiency.⁵³

It is through her passion for glory to be 'Empress of this fair world' (IX, 568), to be able to command and to be obeyed, to be

goddess humane (IX, 732), and to be more equal than and superior to Adam that Eve decides to disobey. So it is her desire for godhead, as Dennis H. Burden puts it, that leads Eve seduced by the serpent to disobey God.⁵⁴

If the Catholic viewpoint sees pride as the error of Eve, the Protestant position is that it is her infidelity, unbelief that caused her disobedience. Accepting this position as Miss Revard does, J. M. Evans modifies it by saying,

the main burden of her speech is not that she disbelieves God, but that she has begun to believe the serpent; credulity rather than doubt is what she expresses.⁵⁵

But when Eve expresses her decision that she cannot go against God's command, to disobey which is to die, the serpent 'puts on new part' and replies:

God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just;
Not just, not God; not feared then, nor obeyed:

(PL IX, 700-701)

Eve does believe this. Is it possible to believe Satan's words that there is no harm in eating the forbidden fruit and that God will not punish her and be just at the same time, without disbelieving God's command, reiterated by Raphael? Listening to her arguments,

In the day we eat
Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die,
How dies the serpent? He hath eaten and lives,...

(PL IX, 762-764)

we are but to feel that she refuses to believe in the divine veracity. She so strongly believes Satan's account of the fruit that she distrusts the words of God. That is why she declares:

but his forbidding
Commends thee more,...
Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?
Such prohibitions bind not.

(PL IX, 753-54, 759-60)

This is clear disobedience due to her lack of faith in the Word, which the poet laments as "foul distrust" (IX, 6).

Placing one's trust in the wicked in conscious mistrust of the good seems to be a recurrent motif in the annals of human drama, ever since Eve believed in Satan in defiance of God's command. Kaikēyi, the second wife of Dasaratha believes in her maid servant the hunchback Manthara rather than in her husband. Kaikēyi's disobedience to her husband results in her husband's death and in Rama's exile. Sita in Panchavati similarly believes the simulated voice of the golden deer to be Rama's words crying for help. She therefore asks Lakshmana to go to Rama and save him from danger. Lakshmana comforts her saying that Rama will not be in danger; no one in the universe can harm Rama and that it is only the deceptive voice of the dying Rakshasa who has come in the form of a golden deer.⁵⁶ But Sita would not believe him, but believes the deer's voice and forces Lakshmana to go in search of Rama, thus staying alone in the cottage facilitating Ravana's guileful entry.

If Sita remains alone by forcing Lakshmana out, Eve seeks separate gardening by forcing Adam give her permission to go alone. In both the cases the heroines disobey the good and are lured to obey the evil. Their being alone is thus brought about by their own wilful obstinacy in spite of sufficient advice and warning.

If Eve's disobedience consists in going away from her husband in spite of his dissuasion and in disbelieving the veracity and seriousness of God's command, Adam's disobedience consists in his allowing Eve to rule his decision, and placing his love for Eve above his love for God. The 'Great Chain' suffers breaking in two of its links. The hierarchy is violated in two ways. Eve disrupts the order by defying her natural superiors, Adam and God, and by obeying her inferiors, the Snake, and the Tree whom she worships as a pagan,⁵⁷ forgetting her God. Adam violates the Order by failing to rule his wife, his inferior by allowing her to go away from his side that fateful morning. Raphael has already told him:

...be not diffident

Of wisdom, she deserts thee not, if thou

Dismiss not her,...

(*PL VIII*, 562-564)

But in spite of this, Adam allows her to take the decision. His

words of permission "Go, for thy stay, not free, absents thee more" (IX, 372) are as false as Eve's words of parting:

With thy permission then, ...

The willinger I go, ...

(PL IX, 378, 382)

For, though it is true that he goes willingly, it is not true that she does so with *his* permission; she just literally 'takes' the permission from him! Thus both Adam and Eve have sinned even at this early stage by reversing their roles:

Eve by assuming the leadership that Milton's age believed belonged in nature to the male, Adam in failing in the authority it was his duty to assert.⁵⁸

Milton's Dalila shows similar disobedience to her husband's interests. "A philistine she may be, but her first duty was not to her countrymen, but to her husband."⁵⁹ She violates the domestic order by betraying her husband to his enemies, thus bringing about the tragedy.

The second and more serious act of Adam's disobedience occurs when he too eats the forbidden fruit offered by Eve. This is the most trying predicament of Man in the history of the human race. And this is the central action taken by Adam on which hinges the plot of the epic; the focal point of the plot being an act of voluntary human decision, an act of disobedience or moral choice.⁶⁰ If Eve has fallen by succumbing to the temptation of Satan, Adam falls by himself. When Eve offers the fruit he knows very well that she is lost:

How art thou lost, how on a sudden lost,

Defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote?

(PL IX, 900-901)

Not only he knows of her fall but also he realizes that she has ruined him also. She has just offered him the fruit to eat so that he could be her equal in 'growing upto godhead'. He is not under any obligation to obey her wish. But he resolves to die with her (IX, 907). The situation offers a choice between two alternatives. He can choose not to eat the fruit and remain un-fallen as does Abdiel in Heaven. Or he can eat it and receive the penalty. As a creature made in 'the image and likeness' of God,

he ought to have chosen the former. Eve, being Godless, he should have left her.⁶¹ But no, he chooses the latter:

no no, I feel
The link of nature draw me; flesh of flesh,
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.

(IX, 913-916)

This is the fatal trespass, more fatal than that of Eve. He prefers the love of Eve to that of God. In preferring to keep the link of nature intact, he is cancelling and tearing to pieces the great bond of cosmic contract.⁶² Quoting Joseph Hall, Burden argues with logical cogency:

Standing finally to nature, Adam is denying the true end of marriage. Nature is no Christian justification; 'The power of nature is a good plea for those that acknowledge nothing above nature. But it is not an excuse for a Christian'.⁶³

Still endowed with divine reason he ought to have given more weight to the moral and spiritual obligations he owes to God. His very existence in god-like frame of mind and spirit and the very Eve who has now become a 'rival' to God in claiming his allegiance, are all God's gifts to him. As Prof. Rama Sarma observes,

...his love for Eve is overpowering him. He knows full well that the eating of the forbidden fruit is a transgression of God's Command, a violation of God's trust, a breach of promise and hence an act of disobedience. ... Obedience to God is a primary duty; love for Eve is only a secondary duty and ethically considered the former has precedence over the latter.⁶⁴

Though on the human level, Adam's moral choice may be acceptable or even admirable to our postlapsarian taste, within the framework of the fable of the Fall as envisaged and constructed by Milton, Adam's choice is wrong and ungrateful. That is why, his meek answer, "She gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (X, 143) invites the retort from the Son:

Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey
Before his voice, or was she made thy guide,

Superior, or but equal, that to her
 Thou didst resign thy manhood, ... (PL X, 145-148)

So does Adam then violate the hierarchy of virtue through his double disobedience with has resulted in the alienation of heaven on the one hand and in inviting Sin and Death, and all their attendant woe into this world of ours, on the other.

Samson, another hero of Milton is also portrayed as disobedient to God. Although a faithful servant of God, he fails to keep God's counsel that he should not reveal the secret of his strength. 'Swayed by female usurpation' (SA 1060) 'at times when men seek most repose and rest' (SA 406), he yields and impiously publishes the holy secret – a weak and shameful act of sin. Thus God's counsel having not kept through his 'foul effeminacy', he finds himself as a bonds slave, a 'blot to honour and religion' (SA 411-412).

Some Epic Echoes

An interesting point of similarity that we find here is that most of the heroes or epic personages of Milton and Kamban are seen as committing acts of disobedience of disastrous results through temptations by women, directly or obliquely, with the one exception, of course, of Satan. Adam is overcome with female charm; Samson through female snares; Rama through his fondness for satisfying the vanity of Sita and Ravana through the sinister temptations by Sūrpanaka. While women worthies like Kaikēyi, Eve and Dalila are themselves tempted to disobey through their passion for power, glory, and money, Sita alone is seen disobeying the discerning advice of Lakshmana for a 'petty' reason, i.e., for the sake of a pet, the golden deer.

Another point of significant similarity is that most of the cultures whose representative epics are discussed here seem to have treated nature, the flora and fauna, as being sympathetic to the human drama of moral and spiritual conflict.

Virgil records the sorrowful reaction of Nature to the disastrous marriage of Dido with Aeneas in the cave.

Both the primal earth and Juno, Goddess of marriage, give the sign: fires flashed and the heavens shone, witness to their marriage, and the nymphs cried out on the mountain top.

That day was the first day of destruction and the first cause of evil, for Dido is unmoved by appearance or reputation nor does she consider her love secret any longer. She calls it marriage and covers over sin with that name.

(*Aeneid* IV, 166-72)⁶⁵

Following Addison, Prof. Blessington invites our attention to this Virgilian echo in Milton's epic where, being unable to bear the sin of Eve,

Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat
Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe,
That all was lost.

(*PL* IX, 782-784)

Adam completes the Fall by his share of sin when 'With liberal hand: he scrupled not to eat' the forbidden fruit. Milton also completes the reaction of the nature saying:

Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and nature gave a second groan,
Sky loured and muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original; ...

(*PL* IX, 1000-1004)⁶⁶

Closely comparable with the Miltonic lines above is a stanza in the third Book of Kamban's epic. When Ravana in the guise of a hermit is received by credulous Sita and when he takes his seat in the cottage revolving his nefarious purpose in his head,

The mountains trembled at the Rakshas' sight
And trees a tremor felt from lowest root
Upto their topmost height. The birds grew dumb,
While beasts in terror crouched, and cobras stole
Away with shrunken hoods!

(*KR* III, 9:35)⁶⁷

As Virgil supplied the probable epic source for such a portrayal of nature by Milton, *Cilappathikāram* seems to be the first such source for Kamban. The cowherds on the outskirts of the city of Madurai notice certain disorders in nature. The poet Ilango

Adigal represents the deep sorrow of Justice at the unjust execution of Kōvalan through such natural disorders. The cowherds exclaim:

Alas! The milk in the pot has not curdled.
 The beautiful eyes of the big humped bulls
 are full of tears; ...
 The fragrant butter in the *Uri* does not melt.
 The lambs do not frisk about; ...
 Herds of cows with their four-nippled udders
 are shuddering and bellowing in fear; the big
 bells (tied to their necks) fall down. O! some
 calamity is happening.⁶⁸

A striking similarity in regard to nature's sympathetic reaction to human sorrows and miseries has been observed by H. M. Posnett in a Chinese drama, *Teou-ngo-youen* where nature resents the unjust condemnation of the innocent, as in *Cilappathikāram*. In the Chinese play, "Snow in the hearts of summer and a three years' drought attest the innocence of the unjustly executed Teou-ngo". Posnett concludes his observation saying:

if for the epic poet of England the seasons change at the sin of Adam, for the Chinese dramatist they change at the condemnation of the innocent.⁶⁹

One more aspect of epic similarity we happen to notice in the course of our discussion. This is the theme of *Felix Culpa*. The history of the idea of the *Fortunate Fall* is traced by Arthur O. Lovejoy in his famous article, "Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall".^{69A} According to this theory, Man's disobedience has resulted in the reincarnation of the Son as Christ to restore to the race of Adam and Eve a far happier Paradise within. After having the apocalyptic vision of the history of the world till the second Adam's victory over Satan, Adam replete with joy and wonder says:

Whether I should repent me now of sin
 By me done and occasioned, or rejoice
 Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
 To God more glory, more good will to men
 From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.

(PL XII, 474-478)

It is true that this idea of *felix culpa*, as A.G. George observes,⁷⁰ does not explain the fall, though it redeems the poem from pessimism. More than that it shows, as Addison has remarked, that at the end of the poem, Adam is left triumphant in the depth of misery, while Satan is miserable in the height of his triumph.⁷¹ By making his hero give expression to this emotion of jubilation, Milton seems to cherish this theme.

The Tamil epic by Kamban also expresses such idea of *felix culpa*. Interestingly enough Kamban's epic applies this idea at two levels. At the supernatural level, the familiar one, the disobedience of Kaikēyi induced by the gods has resulted in the adventures of Rama the nectar of whose name is enjoyed by the whole world.⁷² Kaikēyi's heartlessness is, therefore, to be preferred as an example of *felix culpa*. The paradox residing in this happy *hubris* is that the fall of Rama, in other words banishment of Rama brings about the banishment of the Rakshasas from this world and the release of the gods. So Kaikēyi's act of disobedience is considered as an act of charity.

At the human level, which is the epic level also, Kaikēyi's baneful act of banishment has been the happy cause of winning over so many brothers en route. In spite of losing his throne, Rama offers two of the mightiest thrones to his friends. Instead of depriving Rama of his home and brothers, her stern command has facilitated him to widen his domestic horizon upto Lanka. Kosala is happy that Rama's banishment to the forest has enriched the prince with brothers like Guha, the hunter. "Grieve not therefore sons" says Kosala, "that you have been sent to the forest by your father".⁷³ Kamban like Milton emphasizes this point by making his magnanimous hero express his own sentiments in this regard. On accepting Vibhishna into their fold, Rama says:

We were five brothers with Guha; then with Sugriva we became six. With you, O my dear love, we have seven brothers now. By sending me to the forest, your father Dasaratha has become well-renowned for his illustrious sons.⁷⁴

The concept of *felix culpa* is thus found enshrined in Kamban's epic as applied to both the worlds of his characters. More than at the spiritual level, it is at the human level that the force and significance of this theme are depicted in enduring colours.

4. Inordinate passions

We saw in the previous section how 'order' is violated by disobedience. By failing to rule the inferior, the inferior is allowed to rule the superior. This is how 'upstart passions' and 'inordinate desires' came to 'catch the government from reason' (*PL* XII, 87-88). *Paradise Lost* portrays, therefore, the usurpation of reason by the passions as a characteristic of both Satan and Adam's fall.⁷⁵ Of all the passions that the postlapsarian world has come to witness lust, anger, vengeance and ambition for power, glory, etc., may be considered as the major ones. Of these, anger and vengeance have found special treatment in the Homeric epics and, in the pre-Kamban Tamil epics to a lesser degree. These two do not however, receive such major treatment in *PL* and *KR*, although they find depiction as associate aspects of the dominant passions namely, lust and ambition.

(a) Lust

Satan is not portrayed as lustful in Milton's epic. His incestuous relationship with Sin may be cited here. But being in the garb of allegory the force of 'representation' is ineffective. Moreover his incest is not 'represented' but only referred to by Sin to establish her relationship with Satan. Belial, one of 'the prime in order and in might' of Satan's followers is depicted as lustful. Milton describes him as one

... than whom a spirit more lewd
Fell not from heaven, ... who filled
With lust and violence the house of God. (*PL* I, 490-96)

The same Belial receives the following description in *Paradise Regained*:

Belial the dissolutes spirit that fell,
The sensualest, and after Asmodai
The fleshliest incubus... (*PR* II, 150-152)

It is he who advises in the council of Satan's host as to how they should tempt the Second Adam:

Set women in his eye and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the fairest found; (*PR* II, 153-154)

By comparing him to Asmodai who is regarded as the personification of lust⁷⁶ and by making Satan himself retort that Belial weighs all others by himself, Milton condemns the passion of lust.

Regarding the human pair, prelapsarian love is not condemned, but praised as happy wedded love, and the 'mysterious' union of man and woman in marriage. Changing his note to tragic after the Fall, the poet portrays the lovers in burning lust. 'Carnal desire inflaming', Adam begins to 'cast lascivious eyes' on Eve who repays him wantonly. He forbears not 'glance or toy of amorous intent' and her eyes dart contagious fire. The change in Eve 'fairer now than ever' and in Adam inflamed with ardour to enjoy her is, the fallen Adam thinks, due to the 'bounty of this virtuous tree' (IX, 1033). The love's 'disport' has become the 'solace of their sin'. "Milton first shows us a love that is 'peace', in which 'sweet reluctant amorous delay' plays its part, and then a love that is 'rage', a greedy coupling".⁷⁷

It follows then that Milton does not condemn love which leads upto heaven and which is 'both the way and guide'. But when it becomes 'sunk in carnal pleasure', and when it becomes passion, void of reason, then it is censured as lust. Lust follows the Fall; it does not cause the Fall in Milton's poem. "The Fall does not derive from sex", says Earl Miner, "although the Fall includes concupiscence and all other sins."⁷⁸ By applying such inordinate desire to the fallen angels and to the postlapsarian Adam and Eve, Milton condemns lust as a heaven-distancing vice. The aspect of human love which caused Adam's disobedience will be discussed in the next section (Uxoriousness).

Vāli, Sūrpanaka and Ravana of Kamban's epic represent the destructive nature of lust. While Adam's desire is not yet complicated by social implications – with only one person of either sex – the lustful behaviour of these personages of the *Rāmāyana* is shown subject to a well-codified moral laws of a highly developed society. Vāli forcefully captures the wife of his brother Sugriva after driving him away from his kingdom. "Lust towards the wife of another is the highest crime against *Dharma*. I shot my dart at thee⁷⁹ as you have offended *Dharma*." This is how Rama explains his reasons for killing Vāli.

Sūrpanaka, a widow burns in lust for Rama. When Rama refuses her advances telling her that he is already married, she requests him to send away his wife. When Rama is indifferent to her charms she tries to spirit away Sita, but is thwarted by Lakshmana who cuts off her nose and ears in the scuffle that follows. Undeterred by such humiliation, she pleads with Rama to commend her to Lakshmana. When that fails too, she leaves them for Lanka in utter fury vowing to avenge her humiliation.

With studied cunning she tempts Ravana by describing the matchless beauty of Sita and incites him to capture her. Her description of Sita is so captivating that Ravana becomes hopelessly infatuated with the reported beauty of Sita. Kamban says that before actually carrying her off to Lanka and confining her in his city, Ravana imprisoned Sita in his heart.⁸⁰ He goes to Panchavati, the forest abode of Sita and forcefully brings her to Lanka. As she stubbornly refuses his advances he puts her in captivity that she may accept him in due course.

To covet another man's wife is a serious moral crime even in the social order of Lanka. His own brothers Vibhishna and Kumbhakarna do not approve of Ravana's action. Both of them condemn his action in no equivocal terms. They stress the fact that Ravana's action is unrighteous; Ravana's might of arms will not be effective before Sita's fire of chastity; Rama is not just a human being; he is the defender of virtue and that vice will not be able to defeat virtue. So it is in the interests of the race of Rakshasas that Sita should be returned to Rama and a reconciliation of peace should be sought.⁸¹ But Ravana's passion for Sita is so strong and it has so blinded his reason that he does not listen to their advice. Neither his own defeat on the first day of war at the hands of Rama, nor the death of many of his warriors including his brother Kumbhakarna could make him realize his fatal decision not to return Sita. It is only the death of his mighty son Indrajit that opens his eyes to his own sin:

O fie

On me that bear this load of shameless life,
And see them live unscathed, who've killed my son
And carried off his head!...

In days gone by I've carried fire and sword
 To Indra's realms, and had them brought beneath
 My sceptre strong; but now to passion fallen
 A slave, the funeral sacrifices, which
 I' th' course of nature thou shouldst offer me,
 I have to offer thee with mingled tears
 And sighs!⁸²

Even after this, Ravana is not willing to retrace his steps and send Sita back to Rama. His pride has hardened his heart and he has reached a point of no return. In his second encounter he accepts the valour of Rama but prefers to die the death of a warrior rather than to yield.

Kambarāmāyanam thus presents the fall of a great king well-versed in the Vedas, a skilled musician and a warrior of invincible strength and valour. All these laudable attributes are laid waste because of this only fault, a burning desire for another man's wife.⁸³ This is a heinous crime in the ethical ambience of the Tamils as in that of India in general. The *Kural* which is the manual of general ethics in Tamil devotes a full chapter to this vice and condemns it as one of the deadliest sins.⁸⁴ We should hasten, however, to say that Kamban's Ravana is not an evil character like Satan who in Milton's epic deliberately chooses evil as his good (IV, 110) and decides not to do anything good. He is a great king, a devotee of Lord Shiva and a symbol and administrator of justice, until he is smitten by lust. Even then he never forces Sita to adultery. He goes on courting her, begging her to accept him. Kamban's portrayal of Ravana is not, therefore, condemnatory as that of Satan by Milton. Kamban's attitude is one of sympathy.⁸⁵ He regrets that such a great warrior and, an emperor of heaven and earth should conduct himself in so nefarious a manner. That is why whereas Milton's Satan ends his adventurous life as a wily old serpent on his belly prone, the death of Kamban's Ravana is portrayed with heroic brilliance and splendour. The epic voice sings:

Quelled was his fury then,
 Ferocious as that of a lion.
 Quelled was his mind;
 Utterly destroyed were

His cunning and deceit;
 Rolled up was his enmity;
 Stilled were the doughty deeds
 Of his massive, battling arms;
Stifled was his lust;
 Wasted lay his imperious might.
 Yet, the transgressor's lifeless face
 Shone now thrice as bright
 As on the day
 When with unabashed head
 He had humbled and laid low
 The sages who had conquered their senses.⁸⁶

All the passions that have tossed him are spent now. He has attained through the holy dart of Rama, a state of 'Shanta Vira', and hence the radiant visage of Ravana is the final image that the poet presents.

So ended the hero of a thousand battles, the most valiant hero excepting Rama that epic poetry has ever created or sung. Achilles and Hector, and even Arjuna and Bhima look like mere pigmies when placed beside this giant King of Lanka. We do not speak only of the physical stature that the poet attributes to him. His passions and his power, his valour and his pride, his prowess and his authority are on the same gigantic scale as his vast physical proportions.⁸⁷

Tracing the connection between eroticism and violence John Leyerle notes after Herbert Marcuse, a follower of Freud that "Free gratification of man's instinctual needs is incompatible with civilized society". He also shows how

The explicit connection of eroticism and violence is the central theme in many of the major texts of western tradition from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* onwards.⁸⁸

Citing the story of Paris, Helen and the fall of Troy and its parallel, the story of Lancelot, Guinevere and the fall of Camelot, Leyerle posits the theory of love and death in western literature patternised as the 'Game and Play of Hero'. Kamban's version of the *Rāmāyana* and for that matter even the Sanskrit original by

Valmiki can be said to have the theme of love and death as the central axis of the epic action. The beautiful city of Lanka, its matchless king Ravana and a galaxy of illustrious warriors like Kumbhakarna, Indrajit, etc., are all destroyed owing to the unrestrained passion of lust. Only Vibhishna and his few followers escape the total annihilation because, they do not tolerate Ravana's unholy passion for Sita. John Leyerle's comment confirms the universality of such a denouement of passionate life:

At the end of the *Nibelungenlied* the courts of the Burgadians and of the Huns are, like Camelot and Troy, destroyed; as often happens in the literary game of hero, unrepressed eroticism destroys the society that tolerates it.⁸⁹

(b) *Anger and Vengeance*

Anger and vengeance do not find major portrayal in both the epics under discussion. Though Francis C. Blessington compares Satan's anger with Achilles' wrath as engendered by their misconceived notions of 'injured' merit,⁹⁰ Satan's anger is not his chief characteristic as in the case of Achilles where it is thematic. Satan shows only fits of anger as he does in Book IV of *Paradise Lost* at the end of his soliloquy on Mount Niphates. It shows his frustration. Milton's disapproval of anger, and for that matter any distemper is clear when he says:

For heavenly minds from such distempers foul
Are ever clear. (PL IV 118-119)

Kamban's characters also do not exhibit savage anger. Ravana becomes angry whenever somebody says or does something against his wish. For example, he chafes with anger when Vibhishna and Kumbhakarna advise him to return Sita to Rama. But he is able to control his anger. It is after the death of his son Indrajit that he becomes wrathful and hastens to kill Sita herself; but when advised by Mahodara, his minister, against such ignoble action, he holds his anger in check. Even earlier, when he decides in anger to kill Hanuman for his destroying city-gardens besides killing many of his guards, he accepts Vibhishna's advice that messengers should not be harmed, and gives up his intention. Lakshmana becomes furious at the news of Rama's exile and prepares to fight. But Rama pacifies his anger. Guha's anger described at length at the

sight of Bharata's army is also an instance of appeased anger in *Kambarāmāyanam*. Rama himself exhibits such fits of anger as for example, when he decides to destroy the world along with Ravana for his killing of Jatāyu. Lakshmana is terrified at his brother's anger. But Jatāyu explains to him that it was their fault to have followed the deer leaving Sita alone and there is no reason for his becoming angry with the world.⁹¹ Rama sees the point and cools down. Anger as an aspect of heroic character is thus portrayed in lighter shades in *Kambarāmāyanam* and that too, often in appeasement.

Satan with the 'approval' of the Infernal Council decides to wreak vengeance upon Heaven. But after his experience with God's 'thunder', he contemplates an indirect war on God. So in his effort to find 'some easier enterprise', Satan chooses Man 'to diet his revenge'. His plans are either to drive 'the puny inhabitants' out of Eden (II, 367) or to seduce them to his party so that God 'with repenting hand/Abolish his own work' (II, 369-70). But Satan is not 'fated' to accomplish the 'study of revenge' in either way. Ironically enough, it is he who is driven out of Eden by the celestial sign of the scales, and again it is his own 'works', not God's, in the race of Adam and Eve that are going to be abolished by the Second Adam (XII, 394-395) as willed by the Almighty. Satan is, as David Daiches correctly observes, not only hardly heroic in choosing Man, the innocent third party for his revenge,⁹² but also unsuccessful even in this 'easier enterprise'. In his efforts to pervert all that is good, to create evil out of good, he has only given ampler chance to God to 'outdo hellish hate' and to 'redeem what hellish hate so easily destroyed' (PL III, 300-301).

The tragic plot of *Samson Agonistes* consists in a way, of the theme of revenge also. Manoa is happy that his son has heroically 'finished/A life heroic, on his enemies fully revenged' (SA 1710-12). The chorus rejoices that Samson has fulfilled the work for which he was 'foretold to Israel' through a "dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious" (SA 1660). Milton makes it clear that while Samson fulfills God's mission through his revenge directly, Satan also helps God's purpose in his own way by heaping sin upon sin on himself by seducing Man through his passion for revenge.

Like Milton's Satan, Kamban's Sūrpanaka also helps the Divine plan by planning a revenge on Rama. In her frantic efforts to separate Sita from Rama so that she can succeed in her adulterous love for Rama, she tempts Ravana to abduct Sita. Even though she succeeds in her plan of separating Sita, she is not shown as successful in gaining Rama's love. It is surprising to note that Kamban a supreme artist noted for his artistic abilities in carefully connecting the episodic strands to the main thread of the plot, does not show what happens to Sūrpanaka after inducing Ravana to Sita's abduction. May be the structural role assigned to her in the story is just to connect Ayodhya and Lanka, giving a further push to the plot, the same way that the role of the hunchback Mandhara is over with her temptation of Kaikēyi. Since without her successful temptation of Ravana, Rama could not fulfil his mission on earth as the Protector of *Dharma* or *Aram*, Sūrpanaka's cunning revenge also serves the purpose of the heroic mission of Rama. Both the epics portray the passion of revenge, though in a lighter shade as unsuccessful when directed towards sinister and sinful purposes.

(c) *Ambition*

If Ravana is overthrown through his unrighteous lust for Sita, Satan is reduced to a hissing serpent owing to his ambition and pride. If Ravana disrupts the horizontal order of social fellowship by violating the domestic order, Satan violates the vertical order of hierarchy by aspiring to be equal to his 'natural superior', God. Blind to the spiritual supremacy of God as the Creator, this martial hero thinks God and the Son to be his equals except for the thunder. He betrays this folly when he says:

...furthest from him is best
Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. (PL I, 247-249)

With such mistaken notion of equality Satan affects Godhead and makes impious war against Heaven. He is not ignorant of the reason of his fall when he is alone. For, though he says to his fallen host that their fall is due to God's concealed force of the thunder, when he is all by himself he knows:

...pride and worse ambition threw me down
Warring in heaven against heaven's matchless king;
(PL IV, 40-41)

His mad ambition for power is a manifestation of his obdurate pride not to obey anyone and not to be ruled by anybody. Submission or subjection to anyone else he disdains. That is why he says:

Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition though in hell:
Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven. (PL I, 261-263)

This is mere rhetoric to cloak his lust for power, and mistaken glory under the guise of liberty. To infuse false enthusiasm in the minds of his terror-stricken host, he makes such perverse statements and calls his 'impious war and proud battles' a 'strife of glory' (VI, 290). No wonder his audacious and wilful ambition couched in Athenian oratory has drawn the following comment from one of our modern Miltonists comparing him to a panel of powermongers:

His love of power is camouflaged under a veneer of democratic and republican sentiments. He is like Richard III, who cloaks his ruthlessness, brutality and over-ambition under the guise of aversion to Kingship. Or he may be likened to Tamburlaine, Napoleon or Hitler who had the same madness for power.⁹³

His madness for power is so acute that he does not hesitate to stoop to any level. He feels ashamed—once an archangel himself, and now the 'Antagonist of heaven's almighty king' (X, 387)—to hide himself in the sleeping serpent, 'O foul descent'. But this is only momentary remorse. He swells up again and justifies his intent.

But what will not ambition and revenge
Descend to? Who aspires must down as low
As high he soared,... (PL IX, 168-170)

In a way his words come true. For, his 'strife for glory' after all ends only in his losing everything he had—his image and glory, his form and what not—when he becomes permanently the creature which he entered in as a temporary abode. He would have echoed his very own words, "pride and worse ambition threw me down"—a literal truth now—had he only been able to speak with his forked-tongue.

It is with this selfsame ambition for power and glory through knowledge that Satan seduces Eve. That Eve is ambitious to acquire more knowledge and thereby to become 'more equal' or even superior to Adam is evident from the central run of her speech immediately after her fall. Fancying herself 'growing into God-head', Eve continues her soliloquy—a postlapsarian symptom:⁹⁴

But keep the odds of knowledge in my power
Without copartner? So to add what wants
In female sex...
And render me more equal, and perhaps,...
Superior; for inferior who is free? (PL IX, 820-825)

Eve's desire to be promoted in the natural scale was a passion. In her passion to become a god, she is like Satan who aspired through pride to equal God Himself. The only difference is that while Satan is self-tempted, Eve is tempted by Satan. In spite of the difference, the fact remains that both of them become fallen creatures through their ambition to overreach.

Despite the fact that there is no portrayal of ambition in *Kambarāmāyaṇam* as deliberately as in *Paradise Lost*, Kaikēyi may be seen as acting through her passion for power and glory. Its importance is not structural, but causative in that without her ambitious interference the epic action will not move further. Another distinction of the results of her ambition is that whereas Satan and Eve are directly affected by their passionate violation of the order, the disastrous results of her decision do not affect Kaikēyi except that her son himself disapproves of her action. The pungency of her violation is further softened by the fact that like Eve she is also not self-tempted; she just falls a victim to the persuasions of the hunchback Mandhara. The repetition of the epic voice praising her lapse and its results as the *felix culpa*, as we have seen earlier, blots out from the minds of the readers whatever ill-will remains in their minds regarding her rebellious behaviour.

5. Uxoriousness

If Eve has disobeyed the command of God through her lack of adequate faith, Adam violates the hierarchy of virtue through his excessive fondness for his wife. In accordance with the scheme of things in Paradise he is superior to Eve and as such he should

rule her and she should obey him. Eve herself is happy to accept this hierarchy before the Fall:

O thou for whom
And from whom I was formed flesh of thy flesh,
And without whom am to no end, my guide
And head, what thou has said is just and right.

(PL IV, 440-443)

And again when Adam proposes rest when the hour of night approaches Eve responds:

My author and disposer, what thou bid'st
Unargued I obey; so God ordains,
God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.

(PL IV, 635-638)

Instead of disallowing her to 'separate' gardening, Adam permits her to go alone of course, after expressing his reluctance. He should have been 'firm'. But he meekly allows her to have her wish. Even though Northrop Frye thinks that Adam is right in doing so because he is leaving her will free⁹⁵ Dennis H. Burden's position seems to be closer to the text. Citing Eve's words,

Too facile then though didst not much gainsay,
Nay didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Hadst thou been firm and fixed in thy dissent,
Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me.

(PL IX, 1158-1161)

in support of his argument, Burden shows that Adam's uxoriousness has been the cause of his misjudgement in approving her departure from him.⁹⁶

When Eve returns to him after the Fall and 'with countenance blithe her story told', Adam understands beyond doubt that Eve has disobeyed God's sole command. From his slack hand the garland falls and, without Eve's persuasion he decides to be ruined with her; he scruples not to eat 'against his better knowledge'. If Eve has eaten the apple without knowing that she is disobeying the command, Adam disobeys 'against his better knowledge'. Adam's sin is thus more serious than Eve's.⁹⁷ From the reason he gives

that he cannot be parted from her (through death) who is his flesh of flesh and bone of his bone, it is clear that he prefers *eros* to *agape*. By obeying Eve's persuasion (through her charms) Adam disobeys God, a double disobedience. In referring to the link of nature, Adam neglects the higher link to which he is answerable. He does not even try to resist the force of the link of nature. He merely allows his passion to catch the government of his reason.⁹⁸ He does not even think of God at the time of eating the fruit as Eve does not think of Adam while she 'plucked' and 'ate' the fruit.⁹⁹ It is interesting to recall how the 'pious' Aeneas under more or less similar circumstances struggles between his love for Dido and his 'mission' to leave Carthage. He feels as passionately for Dido as Adam does for Eve. But he chooses the love for God and rejects Dido's. The decision is not easy but, 'the mind remains unshaken while the vain tears fall'.¹⁰⁰

Since Adam does not make any efforts to obey God, his lapse is not one of insufficiency, but just weakness for Eve's fellowship. That is why the poet plainly describes his disobedience as

...not deceived

But fondly overcome with female charm. (PL IX, 998-999)

Milton's comment in his argument to Book IX, "Adam... resolves through vehemence of love to perish with her" reinforces his epic voice just quoted above.

Readers of *Paradise Lost* have, however, reacted differently to this authorial comment. Critics like Waldock, too familiar to quote, think that Adam's love for Eve and his decision to fall with her are 'admirable' as he is true to human nature. Steadman is rightly sympathetic towards man's condition when he says:

...even in the act of disobedience, his willingness to undergo death and his devotion to his wife are not entirely illaudable.¹⁰¹

Steadman is not blind to Adam's lapse. He is only sorry for the human lot—for the human predicament, as succinctly put by Harriett Hawkins:

Love Eve without deifying her; love Adam without worrying about being superior or inferior to him. That is the

ideal, but how difficult it is for human beings to achieve is made evident in the situation between Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost*...¹⁰²

Samson, another of Milton's heroes is also depicted as a victim of his excessive love for his wife. He fails to be faithful to God by revealing the secret of the source of his invincible strength. Samson, unlike Adam, needs no authorial comment in regard to the cause of his disobedience. He explains himself:

At times when men seek most repose and rest,
I yielded, and unlocked all my heart,
Who with a grain of manhood well resolved
Might easily have shook off all her snares:
But foul effeminacy held me yoked
Her bond-slave;... (SA 406-411)

Both Adam and Samson are portrayed as making a "travesty of their lives by surrendering themselves to women. They betray the trust reposed in them by God and transgress the command of God. Their primary obligations become secondary to them when they are 'overcome by feminine charm'."¹⁰³ Milton is quite emphatic that uxoriousness causes one's fall and that passions should not be allowed to catch the government of reason.

If Milton demonstrates that Man still with the 'image and likeness of God' in him allows his passion to overrule his reason. Kamban shows that the man in Rama, in spite of his being an Avatar is led astray by his love for his wife. Despite Lakshmana's advice that the golden deer is not real, but one of the Rakshasas in disguise, Rama is inclined to catch it for Sita.¹⁰⁴ Dismissing his brother's caution that we are not sure of the aim of this disguise, nor are we aware of the Rakshasas' strength behind this stratagem, Rama prepares to follow the deer. Rama's decision is influenced by Sita who shows him the deer and requests him to catch it for her. She is so impatient that she tells them that before they decide whether it is a true one or false the deer will run out of sight. Stung by her remarks, Rama decides it should be caught. Then Lakshmana offers to go. But Sita bursts out sulkily, "It seems, you would not yourself go and get it for me, my husband!"

And *that* goads him into chivalrous action and he sets out for the deer in total disregard of Lakshmana's 'sage and serious' advice.¹⁰⁵

Rama has to make a choice between Sita's persuasion to go and Lakshmana's advice not to go—a choice to be made between passion and reason. Rama chooses passion and allows reason to be overruled by 'female charm'. The poet's imagery suggests this charm.¹⁰⁶ And we know that this decision of Rama results in the abduction of Sita and in the ensuing war. Apart from Rama's own realization that Lakshmana was right,¹⁰⁷ Jatāyu the vulture-king who informs them of Ravana's abduction of Sita, makes them realize their irresponsibility in going after the deer leaving Sita alone in the cottage.¹⁰⁸

Both Milton and Kamban emphasize the fact that one should guard oneself against 'female usurpation' by always keeping one's love for his wife within limits. Kamban's world is not of course, conditioned by a doctrine of a hierarchy similar to the one that we have seen governing the world of Milton and that of *Paradise Lost*. He is governed, however, by a literary tradition represented by great works like the *Kural*¹⁰⁹ which disapproves of 'male submission' to female charm or domination. Hence his portrayal of uxoriousness as an aspect of heroism to be discarded.

Our discussion of uxoriousness in this section reveals to us certain characteristic features common to both the cultures. First, all the three heroes Adam, Samson and Rama do succumb to female charm even though there is a difference in the degree of their lapses. That is to say, in the case of Rama as Kamban has portrayed the lapse is just momentary and less passionate. Secondly, all the three accept their lapses. Thirdly, all of them recapture their loss, in different ways, of course: Adam through regained faith, obedience and patient endurance—Samson by absolute surrender to the will of God and using his God-given strength to fulfil His mission—and Rama through his martial valour and his moral qualities epitomized in his principle of *Universal Brotherhood*. And fourthly, this particular lapse of these heroes sets in motion, structurally speaking, the main plot of the works (as in *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*) or helps the main plot gather momentum (as in *Kambarāmāyanam*).

6. Self-love

Satan's pride which causes his fall springs from his self-love. He can love none but himself. Conversely he cannot relish others' happiness or glory. Being an expert pretender he covers his self-love from being read by others easily. But he is uncovered for a while by his own daughter, Sin when she tells him of his own lore:

...who full oft
Thy self in me thy perfect image viewing
Becamest enamoured,... (PL II, 763-765)

Such a Narcissist¹¹⁰ as Satan is in loving himself only, he cannot bear the glory of others. Self-love on the one hand begets pride and on the other generates envy and hatred for others. That is why Satan is unable to bear the sight of the Son being honoured by God by 'exalting' him as the *Messiah*. So Satan's rebellion against God in Heaven is engendered by his selfish ambition which is the essence of his character.¹¹¹ "So it is surely a personal desire to be exalted and powerful that makes Satan instigate the rebellion."¹¹² The fact that the fallen angels suffer in Hell on account of *his* selfish war becomes clear when the poet declares:

The fellows of *his* crime, the followers rather...
Millions of spirits for *his* fault amerced
Of heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
For *his* revolt,... (PL I, 606-611)
(italics for emphasis)

Satan's demagogic outpourings that he and his followers are self-begot, self-raised' by their own quickening power and that their puissance is their own,¹¹³ are all false slogans of perverse liberty. He just wants to rouse their passions against God and thus strengthen his personal stand. That he is not for true 'liberty' is evident from the fact that he becomes their head and sits high 'on a throne 'of a royal state' exalted by merit 'to that bad eminence' (PL II, 1-6). His tall talk of glory and liberty is in reality only a cloak for his mad ambition for self-glory. His main concern is self-glorification. That is why we hear nothing about liberty in his soliloquies in Eden.¹¹⁴

Satan's love of self-glory is so complete that he cannot allow anyone but himself to undertake the journey to Eden in that they should not rob him of his personal glory (*PL* II, 468-473). Milton emphasizes this further:

To me shall be the glory sole among
The infernal powers, in one day to have marred
What he almighty styled, six nights and days
Continued making,... (*PL* IX, 135-138)

It is due to such abject egoism that Satan is unable to retrace his steps. It is his disdain, an attribute of his self-love that forbids him to repent.¹¹⁵ "Milton has carefully marked in his Satan", as observes S. T. Coleridge with his characteristic discernment, "the intense selfishness, the alcohol of egotism, which would rather reign in hell than serve in heaven."¹¹⁶

An inevitable result of such self-love is isolation of the person concerned from the society. Satan's egoism earns him his ouster from heaven. Even his confinement in hell does not make him repent. Since he is entirely self-centred he cannot find any joy even in Paradise where everything is happy and blissful. He brings hell with him wherever he goes; for, he cannot fly from hell 'by change of place'. He knows well: "which way I fly is hell; myself am hell" (*PL* IV, 75). And also that he cannot find place or refuge in any of the things of Paradise, such as hills, valleys, rivers, etc. (*PL* IX, 116-118). He feels utter alienation from whatever place he visits.

As Milton shows that selfish souls are isolated from their surroundings, Kamban demonstrates that selfishness alienates one's kith and kin away from his association. By conceiving an adulterous love for Sita, Ravana alienates 'Dharma' or 'Aram' from his city of Lanka. Kamban says that not only the wind, the sunlight, Death and the celestials would not dare to enter the fortified fort of Lanka, even 'Dharma' would not enter it.¹¹⁷ Though he burns with anger on hearing the humiliating experience of his sister and vows to avenge her humiliation, the moment he comes to know of the matchless beauty of Sita he forgets his anger and his vow and he forgets everything except himself and his love for Sita. It is to gratify this lust that he sends Marisa as a deer and gets him

killed. Once the war is started he exiles Vibhishna as he does not approve of his action regarding Sita. Thus he loses the best mind and a virtuous soul from his fold. He sends his brother Kumbhakarna and his son Indrajit, not to speak of countless warriors, to fight against Rama, not to safeguard the interests of his country nor in defence of truth or virtue, but only to keep Sita for himself, Ravana thus allows his ruling passion to destroy everything he possesses: '*Dharma*', his kith and kin, his army, his country and in the end himself. Since he cannot put an end to his selfishness it brings an end to all his glory and life. By subordinating everything else to their self-love Kamban's Ravana and Milton's Satan bring about not only their own destruction but also that of their faithful followers.¹¹⁸

The human fall starts with Eve's self-separation from Adam. It is her vanity and self-love to demonstrate her capacity to resist any temptation that force her to seek or even 'take' permission from 'domestic' Adam. Ironically enough, it is only through awakening in her a sense of self-admiration, of proper dignity and of rights withheld — qualities all summed up in self-love—that Satan tempts Eve and she falls.¹¹⁹ Even though Adam does not seem to exhibit selfishness so deliberately as Satan and Eve do, Helen Gardner finds the same self-love in him, too:

It is a sophistication to say that he dies *for* her; he decides to die *with* her. His motive is not the desire to share her punishment, to make it lighter. The truth rings out in his cry: he cannot live without her. It is for his own sake, to escape the horror of solitude, for the sake of love, rather than for her sake, that he decides to share her fate, whatever it may be.¹²⁰

This close-reading of Helen Gardner finds fair support in Irene Samuel when she says:

What the fall of each separately, of both together, comes to in Milton's version is 'all for self-love and Eden ill lost' enacted by a pair who can briefly dignify self-love with a variety of fine names — desire for knowledge, courage, devotion.¹²¹

Self-love as an aspect of Martial heroism is then shown in the epics of Milton and Kamban as causing destruction to the personages concerned, and as such it is antithetical to charity, the noblest form of love of which we will have occasion to discuss later.

Conclusion

We learn thus from our above analysis that both Milton and Kamban do not approve of the heroic ideal that finds expression through one's physical prowess, pride, defiance of one's Order, etc. That is to say, they have *rejected the ideal of Martial heroism* as representing the primitive method of overcoming one's predicaments or of realizing one's aspirations with wilful disregard of ethical principles.

INTELLECTUAL HEROISM IN THE EPICS OF MILTON AND KAMBAN

1. Vain wisdom

Apart from his martial qualities Satan possesses powers of the intellect also. As a warrior he organizes a war against the heaven's king; infuses 'courage' and 'confidence' into the minds of his followers; and is able to invent 'devilish enginery' (*PL* VI, 553). That he wins the first two days' war speaks for his martial prudence. But as he fails to assess the 'divine' strength of God, his prudence becomes vain; for, as John M. Steadman observes, "To overestimate his natural capacities is the supreme folly."¹ Eve falls a victim to the Serpent through such folly. She thinks she can resist any attempt against her 'faith and love' (*PL* IX, 286-287). But the Serpent's shunning of the "higher intellectual" Adam, and her subsequent fall prove her folly.

The deliberations of the fallen angels in the infernal council prove their intellectual powers in scheming ways and means of wreaking vengeance upon God. They have come to feel the futility of physical strength and hence they opt for guile. Some of the angels busy themselves with,

thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
 Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,
 Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
 And found no end, in wandering mazes lost. (PL II, 558-561)

As a result of the fall, these angels have lost the effects of 'light'. Like the Hell where it is only 'darkness visible', their vision is also darkened through sin, and hence they lose themselves in 'wandering mazes'. Their discussions lead nowhere but to a realization of their own spiritual decay.² That is why the poet characterizes their intellectual pursuits as, "Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy" (II, 565).

Unlike his followers, Satan seems to be able to retain his intellectual vigour even after the fall. In spite of losing his former 'form' and 'glory', he keeps his wits about him. He reveals his power of intellect in discovering the use of arms as a means of revenge, and in plotting a deceptive scheme for the seduction of Man in Eden. It is he who suggests this through Beelzebub. Again in Eden his soliloquy at the beginning of Book IV reveals "an astonishingly candid and exact self-knowledge, and this insight into the motives of his own revolt enables him to judge rightly of the weakest points in Adam's and Eve's defences."³

Satan shows his resourcefulness in avoiding Adam and choosing Eve for his attack. As soon as Eve moves away from Adam to garden separately he deliberates:

Then let me not let pass
 Occasion which now smiles, behold alone
 The woman, opportune to all attempts,
 Her husband, ...not nigh,
 Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
 And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
 Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould,
 Foe not formidable, exempt from wound,
 I not;...

(PL IX, 479-487)

He takes into account the intellectual and physical strength of Adam and Eve, and selects the weaker. Satan displays similar discrimination when deciding the strategy for seducing the Second Adam. He rejects Belial's suggestion to 'set women in his 'eye and in his walk' and criticizes Belial for his thoughtlessness:

Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
All others by thyself; because of old
Thou thyself dot'st on womankind,...

(PR II, 173-175)

He explains to his followers the type of man they are going to tempt now, his wisdom, his objective and his constancy:

But he whom we attempt is wiser far
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
Of greatest things;

(PR II, 205-208)

Satan shows the 'Chānakkīyan' discernment in brushing aside Belial's suggestion. He clarifies:

For beauty stands
In the admiration only of weak minds
Led captive; cease to admire, and all her plumes
Fall flat and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden slighting quite abashed:

(PR II, 220-224)

He not only rejects the plans of his accomplices; he is also able to present an intelligent solution by choosing 'manlier objects' to tempt Christ:

Therefore with manlier objects we must try
His constancy, with such as have more show
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise;
Rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wrecked;

(PR II, 225-228)

All these instances attest to the intellectual powers of Satan-reminding us of the son of Laertes, the man of "many turns." But whereas Odysseus makes use of his knowledge to tide over his

predicaments that withhold him from reaching his destination, Ithaca his source of power and existence, Satan employs his intellectual powers to commit more and more sins that prevent him from reaching his proper destination which is Heaven. Instead of elevating him from his natural position to a higher status, through deeds of 'merit', his knowledge only helps to reduce his stature from that of an archangel to a hissing serpent in the end.

In regard to knowledge and its relation to the development of human beings, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin observes:

*Knowledge for its own sake. But also, and perhaps still more, knowledge for Power...Increased power for increased action. But, finally and above all, increased action for increased being.*⁴

Acquisition of knowledge then should ultimately help one to *increase* or enhance the spiritual stature of his *being*. Satan's intellectual powers are not used towards such spiritual progress. They are employed in the opposite direction. If his physical pride has caused his ouster from Heaven and his confinement in Hell, his intellectual efforts to avenge his fall have brought about his eternal damnation which means, in the spirit of Teilhard's passage quoted above, a *decreasing* of his *being*.

The Greek philosophers, in Milton's opinion, thought that their knowledge is self-begot in that it is fed and fostered by their dialectical argument. They did not believe in or cherish the function of 'inspiration'. Milton is not in sympathy with this view. That is why his Christ rejects the temptation of Athenian wisdom offered by Satan:

Alas what can they teach, and not mislead;
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
Much of the soul they talk, but all awry,
And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none,...

(PR IV, 309-315)

But these are false, or little else but dreams,
conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm. (*PR* IV, 291-292)

By offering such false wisdom Satan seems to be ignorant of true wisdom and, his application of knowledge to seduce a dedicated soul perverting thus the very end of knowledge, reveals his folly. For, "the validity of all knowledge, Milton here implies is conditioned by its origin and by its directive."⁵ True wisdom consists in recognizing the limits of one's own reason and in relying instead on faith, revelation and Providence.⁶ Neither Satan nor his followers seem to possess such wisdom. The knowledge they display neither originates from God nor is directed towards Him. Having lost the power of intuitive reasoning, the fallen angels are obliged to resort to discursive reasoning.⁷ So Satan and his angels are left with only some strength and knowledge which do not *increase* their *being*. Hence their knowledge remains only 'Vain wisdom'.

Ravana as portrayed by Kamban displays remarkable skill in the art of war. He possesses numerous supernal weapons whose employment requires great skill and knowledge of weaponry. His knowledge of performing sacrificial rites and severe austerities is so complete and comprehensive that the gods to propitiate whom these are performed are compelled to grant whatever boons he desires. Apart from these, he is well-versed in the *Vedas*. Hanuman has an opportunity to witness the greatness of Ravana as a man of vast learning. As a captive, Hanuman is brought to Ravana's court. Wonder-struck at the great splendour of the court, he sees Ravana in all his regal majesty. Besides the formidable appearance of his imposing physique, Hanuman sees his other vocational interest also: Ravana's twenty cars are flooded with the beautiful instrumental music played by expert musicians to the accompaniment of the nectar-like vocal songs by celestial damsels.⁸ His faces reflect his enjoyment of the superb dance performed by the divine *danseuse* Menaka.⁹ One of his faces is engaged in the royal duties of discussing with his annexed subjects, the *devas*. Another face of his is in deep consultation with his ministerial triumvir, and yet another is in deep contemplation of how to win Sita's mind towards him.¹⁰ Ravana himself is good at music. He has pleased Lord Shiva through his *vina*. To highlight his profi-

ciency in *vina*, Kamban describes his royal flag adorned with the emblem of a *vina*, while Valmiki shows it with a human head.¹¹

Such interests in the fine arts have not blinded Ravana to the realities of life. He is very well aware of the evanescent nature of this world for all its charms and promises. When his son Indrajit advises him to release Sita and seek reconciliation with Rama, Ravana retorts in anger:

You betray your folly, my son. This physical frame is just like a bubble. We are to die tomorrow, if not today. Do you think worth preserving this transient body by surrendering Sita to Rama? Even if I don't win the war, and die in it—which cannot be helped—my reputation will last so long as the Vedas are sung and Rama's name survives. Is there any end to glory?¹²

Ravana is perfectly correct when he says that glory will not die. He is also quite right that this body has to die sooner or later. But he is wrong in his conception of glory. It is a travesty of truth to say that he is dying for glory while all the world including his brothers with better understanding and even his martial son think that Ravana has earned through his sin an insurmountable enemy in Rama. It is a fine piece of irony that Ravana characterizes his son's sane advice as folly.

Ravana's excellent talents and impressive knowledge of many a human pursuit have become signs of utter folly by his misapplying them to achieve a sinful end. Vibhishna, the wisest among the Rakshasas regrets after Ravana's death that he was such a mad, and senseless creature that he in spite of his varied excellences in war, arts and glory, ruined himself for the improper love of Sita, exchanging thus his glorious life for one of notoriety.¹³

As wisdom consists in right-choosing, folly drives one to wrong-choosing. Ravana's many-sided excellences—martial as well as intellectual—become signs of his folly when he adamantly chooses evil and uses all his powers of intellect in the service of such ill-chosen sin. How else can we style his vast store of knowledge except as

"vain wisdom"? Both Milton and Kamban demonstrate through their portrayal of Satan and Ravana that knowledge becomes wisdom only when directed towards virtuous purposes, and becomes folly or 'vain wisdom' when applied to vicious ends, an epic tradition introduced by Tasso in his *Jerusalem Delivered*.¹⁴

2. Deceitfulness

(a) Dishonesty

M. K. Lodi in his article, "*Comus As a Prelude to Paradise Lost*" has brought to our attention the fact that *Comus* anticipates the later poem in its presentation of the conflict between good and evil."¹⁵ Besides similarities at the thematic level, he also points out the use of rhetoric and other deceitful means by *Comus* at the level of technique. *Comus* foreshadows Satan in using lies to deceive the Lady. Posing as a sincere villager *Comus* offers to conduct the Lady out of the forest 'to a low but loyal cottage' where 'she may be safe'. But the Lady soon finds a false traitor in *Comus* who has banished truth and honesty from his tongue, and accuses him of dishonesty:

Was this the cottage, and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,
These ugly-headed monsters?... foul deceiver,
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With vizored falsehood, and base forgery,...

(*Comus* 692-697)

As a 'faithful' follower of his predecessor, Satan lures the angels under his command in Heaven to the Northern part by telling them,

...there to prepare
Fit entertainment to receive our king
The great Messiah, and his new commands,
Who speedily through all the hierarchies
Intends to pass triumphant, and gives laws. (*PL* V, 689-693)

Satan knows he is lying, for there is no such information from Messiah or from God. To remove the prospective victims to an

opportune place is the preliminary step of all deceivers—a formula akin to the singling out of the victims from their company. Like Comus before him, Satan separates a third of the still unfallen angels to a far-off place to brainwash them. His reason for their hasty assembly is equally false and intended to deceive them:

...king anointed, for whom all this haste
Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,
This only to consult how we may best...
Receive him coming to receive from us
Knee-tribute yet unpaid,... (PL V, 777-782)

It is utterly false. Though Empson regards this lie as 'an ordinary wartime propaganda operation',¹⁶ it need not be taken as a tribute. Because the very approbation partakes of the postlapsarian sentiments. There is no place for relative morality in Heaven, and for that matter, even in Paradise, there is only absolute morality. The notion of comparative morality itself is an indication of the fallen nature to choose 'social amity' before 'agape'. The probationer of falsehood in heaven becomes the prince of lies in hell when he tells his fallen host that they have

...with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of heaven,
And shook his throne. (PL I, 103-105)

It is again a perversion of truth. For 'in fact it is the Son's chariot rather than Satan's armies which shakes heaven to its foundations'.¹⁷ "Satan is merely wrong"; Charles Williams explains, "the facts laugh at him. The facts are that he never came anywhere near shaking the throne, that the utmost power was never called on and that the divine Son...had to check himself in mid-volley lest he should destroy them."¹⁸

He is dishonest to his own followers in tricking them into believing that they are engaged in a free discussion in the infernal council. He has already taken the decision to resort to fraudulent method, as Agamemnon tricks his followers into thinking that they are debating a return to Greece.¹⁹ Shakespeare's (*Henry*

IV, Part I) Bolingbroke offers an interesting comparison when he sits in council to discuss his intention of visiting the Holy Sepulchre, in expiation of his spilling the native blood in civil strife, but in reality he has already sent his soldiers to subdue wild Glendower in the North.²⁰

"Satan lies again to Sin and Death and yet again to Chaos. And the Father of Lies takes his way to earth,"²¹ using all sorts of tricks and lies that would serve his ends. He lies to Uriel as to his intention of visiting the earth:

Unspeakable desire to see, and know
 All these his wonderous works, but chiefly man,
 His chief delight and favour, him for whom
 All these his works so wondrous he ordained,
 Hath brought me from the choirs of cherubim
 Alone thus wandering. (PL III, 662-667)

Being the first to practise 'falsehood under saintly show', Satan has not enough practice to deceive Uriel,²² even though in hell he is quite sure of his lies. Milton seems to suggest here that tricks and falsehood can ensnare only such minds as have already at least at the unconscious level, had some inclination for the bait. To plain minds with no psychic wanderings either through pride or passion, such deceitful baits will not appeal. Abdiel is an example of such a mind. That is why his lies to Gabriel that he has left hell in fear of pain, and that he has come as a faithful leader in search of a good habitation for his angels, do not deceive him. Gabriel explains to Satan himself his words of self-contradiction and utter dishonesty:

To say and straight unsay, pretending first
 Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy,
 Argues no leader but a liar traced
 Satan, and couldst thou faithful add? (PL IV, 947-50)

Satan seems to be unable to speak continuously for sometime without telling a lie and without contradicting himself. C.S. Lewis therefore, correctly assesses him when he says that Satan has become "more a Lie than a Liar, a personified selfcontradiction."²³

The crown of his falsehood is his lie to Eve in Paradise in the form of a serpent. It is final illustration of his consummate skill as a liar, leading to Eve's temptation and revealing her lack of faith in God, and so to the fall of Man; and as such, central to the very action of the plot of the epic. Earl Miner neatly epitomizes the burden of this central lie:

...he is the serpent and eating the forbidden fruit has given him the intellectual soul. By analogy, the fruit can enable Eve to rise correspondingly in the scale of nature up to the status of angels or even of God.²⁴

Every piece of this statement is a lie in the ascending order. First, he is *not* the serpent; secondly, he, whether the serpent or Satan in him, has *not* eaten the fruit; thirdly, the fruit has *not* given the serpent any intellectual being; for, the interdiction against the fruit of the tree applies not to the serpent and not even to Satan for that matter, but only to Adam and Eve. Therefore there is no question of 'strange alteration' in him from dumbness to powers of speech or to 'speculations high or deep' (IV, 599-602). Fourthly, there is nothing inherently good or bad about the fruit; it is only a symbol. Man can be changed not by the fruit but by obedience or disobedience. And lastly, rise in the scale of nature as claimed by the serpent is not real and Eve cannot ascend in the scale by eating the fruit.

Apart from the infernal king, the human pair is also portrayed as resorting to lying, indicating thereby that lying is a 'fallen' nature and as such condemnable. Eve lies to herself first:

So dear I love him, that with him all deaths
I could endure, without him live no life. (PL IX, 832-833)

Like her seducer Eve is unable to think coherently or to think coherently without contradicting herself. Alastair Fowler's remarks on these lines reveal Eve's altered nature:

The first explicit expression of love from Eve—and the first false expression. For in effect she is planning to kill Adam to ease her own mind. ...in reality there is no question of Eve's living without Adam, since if she loses him it will be because she is dead.²⁵

Michael Wilding invites our attention to Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* whose hero Hudibras corresponds to Satan in his skill in lying. Comparing both the characters Wilding says:

Their utter dishonesty must also be stressed—a quality so basic to both of them that it can easily be missed as not worthy of comment. Satan's dishonest rigging of the debate, his lying comment on his return to Hell..., and his lies to Eve..., these are central to his character... These qualities are fully shared by Hudibras...²⁶

It is an interesting contrast to note the singular absence of 'lies' as applied to Kamban's Ravana the antagonist of Rama. Even though Ravana resorts to the strategy of disguise and allows his son to make use of stratagems in the war, he is not depicted as lying to anyone. Surpanaka alone, of the major characters of Kamban's epic is portrayed with this characteristic. Dressed as a charming lady, she lies to Rama about her beautiful form. She says that by repudiating the life of Rakshasas and taking to the path of virtue, she has received this charming form on account of her *tapas*.²⁷ Neither has she left her race nor has she joined the holy band of *devas* and *rishies* as she claims.²⁸

All these lies are directed towards deceiving Rama to accept her as his wife. When frustrated in her plans and disfigured by Lakshmana she hurries to Kara her brother reigning over the forest as Ravana's regent, and complains to him of her humiliation. Then, Kara being killed, Surpanaka speeds to Lanka and falls at Ravana's feet seeking redress and revenge. When asked to explain what she did to deserve such humiliation,²⁹ she repeats the lie which she told Kara, that in her affectionate action of abducting Sita, for his charming spouse, she got disfigured by Rama and Lakshmana.³⁰

This is utter falsehood. She tries to remove Sita physically from the cottage in order that Rama may accept her as his wife, in the absence of Sita.³¹ She does not think of Ravana at all at this juncture as she claims in her explanation in the same way as Eve does not think of Adam when eating the fruit as she professes to have done.³²

Even though her passionate action has been the cause of connecting the diametrically opposite worlds of *Ramarajya* and *Ravana-rajya*, Surpanaka's lies do not seem to be so heinous as those of Satan's. It is her passion for Rama that goads her to resort to lying. But lying as such, whatever may be the motive behind, is wrong and hence her proportionate punishment. Kamban's epic does not have any other examples of this dishonesty.

(b) *Disguise*

Disguise is a favourite device of character-portrayal employed by poets and writers of all cultures. We have seen how gods and heroes mixed freely with each other under various disguises in the epics of Homer and Virgil. Even the Renaissance epics of Tasso and Camoens have made use of this device. From Tasso's epic onwards we observe a difference in the employment of this device in that good characters do not resort to disguise, and it is applied only to evil characters. Spenser has assigned this technique of deceit to characters like Archimago and Duessa setting thus a negative seal on the use of disguise and strategies.

With such tradition before him, Milton also uses this device as applied to the forces of evil. Satan is again led by Comus who assumes the shape of a 'harmless villager' to lead astray the Lady in *Comus*. It is through this appearance that Comus wins her confidence and trust (*Comus* 321-322). Milton reveals his classical bias when he disguises the Attendant Spirit also in *Comus* as a shepherd. Pointing out the use of disguise by the spirit and Comus as one of the several contrasts between the forces of evil and virtue, Rajan observes:

Comus assumes a disguise for purposes of deception while the Attendant Spirit does so for a beneficent end.³³

Even though Professor Rajan's observation is appropriate to the context, change of shape by the benevolent spirits does not seem to enjoy Christian sanction, for commenting on the lines in *Paradise Lost* (Book III, 634-636) which describe Satan's disguise as 'a stripling cherub' Alastair Fowler invites our attention to

Broadbent's remarks on the propriety of the use of this deceptive technique. Broadbent says:

All fluctuations of shape, changes of nature, here and in *Comus* and *Paradise Regained*, are presented as evil symptoms of the Fall itself.³⁴

Fowler further invites our attention to the Scriptural evidence:

For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.³⁵

It is not clear why J. B. Broadbent who makes a reference to *Comu* in this connection does not take into account the metamorphosis of the Attendant Spirit which does good to the Lady. The classical genre of the Mask might have allowed Milton to portray the Spirit in disguise.

In *Paradise Lost* it is Satan who takes on different shapes to suit his different strategies. His first transformation is into 'a stripling cherub'. On his entrance into Eden he sits like a toad near Eve's ear to 'inspire venom' into the organs of Eve's fancy. Becoming a toad cannot be said to be a disguise. For, angelic spirits can dilate or deflate or assume any shape at will.³⁶ That is why Northrop Frye says:

He (Milton) is not saying that Satan actually took these-forms: he merely wants the reader to visualize them in connection with Satan.³⁷

The important disguise that Satan assumes in the course of his 'heroic' adventure is that of a snake which has, through its universal influence over Eve, come to be associated with him ever since he assumed it. It has become synonymous with Satan in mythology, religion and Christian theology as well. As he says that he carries Hell wherever he goes, Satan transforms everything he touches or is in association with for sometime, into his own self. It is not at random that he selects this wily creature. He lavishes his intellectual powers on its choice. Wisdom consists in one's 'right choosing'. Right-choosing does not mean choosing the right thing for any purpose. It means that the end as well as

the means should be 'right'. Here Satan's 'reason' becomes 'right reason' in the limited sense that he has chosen the best thing for 'his' purpose:

...With inspection deep
 Considered every creature, which of all
 Most opportune might serve his wiles, and found
 The serpent subtlest beast of all the field.
 Him after long debate, irresolute
 Of thoughts resolved, his final sentence chose
 Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom
 To enter, and his dark suggestions hide
 From sharpest sight: (PL IX, 83-91)

Satan's powers of resourcefulness are manifest in the choice of his disguise. John M. Steadman's remarks on the appropriateness of Satan's selection of the subtle beast reveal Satan's identification with the ethos of the fraudulent dissembler:

There is a moral affinity between the 'wilie Snake' and the 'Diabolic power' which possesses it; the serpent not only serves as Satan's instrument, but also provides a concrete symbol of his character. He chooses it because its 'native subtletie' resembles his own, and in the end it becomes the spiritual form or hieroglyph of his own guile.³⁸

In *Paradise Regained* Satan appears as 'an aged man in rural weeds' in keeping with the context in the wilderness. He is now in the fallen world unlike during his 'serpentine' days. His purpose is to tempt the Second Adam, 'one greater Man' of the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*. This new disguise of Satan has traditional affinity with Spenser's *Faerie Queene* where Archimago appears as 'An aged Sire in long black weeds Clad' (Book I, i, 29). Satan's intelligence consists in studying the situation and its natural demands, and in choosing the form of disguise in accordance with them. 'A stripling cherub' to Uriel, a beautiful, speaking and walking serpent to a glory-thirsty Eve and 'an old man of mean appearance' to the humble Saviour of mankind—all the three forms of Satan's disguise bear witness to the discriminating powers of Satan, misdirected and misapplied.

Drawing on his tradition, Tamil as well as general Indian, Kamban invests his characters with a variety of disguises assumed for both good and evil purposes. Rakshasas in general, Surpanaka, Marisa and Ravana in particular assume different kinds of disguises. Surpanaka assumes the shape of a charming damsel as we have seen earlier, to allure Rama and win him as her husband. Herself a widow, her passion for Rama a married man with his wife present by him, is a serious moral lapse on her part. Intellectually considered, her bewitching beauty expressed in an exquisite rhythmic gait would be really a snare to any unwary man. Marisa assumes the shape of a golden deer, not out of his own volition but at the sword-point of Ravana. He serves as a bait for Sita and sacrifices his life through his disguise, but before he dies he causes the havoc of separating Sita from her menfolk, thus paving the way for Ravana's entry on the scene which is the purpose of his disguise.

As soon as Sita is left alone, Ravana disguises himself as a hermit with a triple staff in hand. His emaciated body suggests his austere fasting for many days. His tired look and unsteady steps proclaim his long journey without rest and refreshment. Playing on his *Vina*, he chants the *Vedas* while approaching the cottage. This is how Ravana presents himself to Sita now left alone.³⁹ If Surpanaka shows her ingenuity in selecting a suitable shape to accomplish her wish, Ravana shows his imaginative power in suggesting the form of a golden deer for Marisa. He reveals his intelligence in selecting the disguise of a hermit for himself in keeping with the *ashram*-like atmosphere of Sita's cottage and in full consonance with the habit of her mind in receiving as guests such religious persons. The fact that Sita welcomes him into her cottage thinking that he is a spotless 'sanyasin' with an austere vocation⁴⁰ speaks for his success as an expert dissembler.

In addition to these disguises by the Rakshasas there are also other forms of disguise assumed by other persons in the epic. Of these Hanuman assumes several forms in the course of the epic: an old Brahmin to meet and greet Rama in Kishkinda, the macro-form of his divinity (Vishvarupa) to reveal his identity to Rama, the microform when he enters Lanka, and again an old Brahmin to inform Baratha of Rama's return.⁴¹ There are several other characters like the Mount Maināga who assume disguise. All

these disguises fall under two categories: those that are assumed to do some good like the Attendant Spirit in *Comus*, and those that are intended to deceive and destroy others like those of Satan. Such dichotomy in the use of disguise is traditional in Tamil Literature. As we have seen earlier we have Maturāpathi goddess guiding and consoling Kannaki, and the forest nymph in the shape of a damsel to tempt Kōvalan in *Cilappathikāram*. Similarly in *Manimēkalai* disguise is made use of for benevolent purposes.

Unlike Milton, therefore, Kamban presents both the forms of disguise. The Indian epics, including the Tamil tradition approximate in this respect to the Classical position of the West.

Wherever malignant disguise is assumed, both the poets, true to their traditions have portrayed their dissemblers as defeated at the end. Satan's ultimate end as a hissing—not speaking—serpent, prone on its belly—not walking on its legs—is the superb example of how one's deceit is repaid.

(c) *Stratagem*

Strategic planning to overcome their predicaments is an essential aspect of epic heroism resorted to by the epic heroes from the epic of *Gilgamesh* onwards. Milton's tradition as has been noted earlier in chapter Two has ample models of strategic enterprises in Odysseus, Turnus and in the infidel heroes of the Renaissance epics. As in the case of other intellectual feats like deceit and disguise, Milton uses the techniques of deception such as tricks and stratagem also as applied to the diabolic characters in his epics. Stratagems include a concerted use of dishonesty and disguise in practical application. In such strategic operations one's physical prowess counts the least and historically speaking, these stratagems are intended to overcome the might of the body through that of mind. Sharpest turns of mind are therefore, called for in such enterprises. One's knowledge of the situations, the strength and weaknesses of the enemy, the opportune moment for the assault, and one's resources to meet the situations are of studied import in such intellectual designs.

Milton makes use of the Classical tradition by modelling his Satan on the Odyssean principles of *ruse de guerre* in his war in Heaven. Satan is not at his best, however, in Heaven even though

he is able to wean away a third of heaven's angels. His strategic skills are best displayed in his 'easier enterprise' in Eden. He shows his powers of intellect when he proposes his 'bold design' through Beelzebub :

Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what mould,
Or substance, how endued, and what their power,
And where their weakness, how attempted best,
By force or subtlety: (PL II, 354-358)

He spends much thought on his schemes. He is prudent enough to have alternatives when the first plan misfires. He discloses his schemes in an order of preference:

...either with hell fire
To waste his whole creation *or* possess
All as our own, and drive as we were driven,
The puny inhabitants, *or if not* drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. This would surpass
Common revenge,... (PL II, 364-371)
(italics for emphasis)

He has more than one alternative: the first two depend on force, and the last one on the intellect. If their downfall to Hell is any indication, he can hope only on the last choice. Till he reaches Eden his plans work as he devised, but his altercation with Gabriel proves to him that the first two choices are of no avail. He, therefore, resorts to his final stratagem of singling out Eve from Adam through his dream and assuming the shape of the 'subtle beast'. He seduces Man as he has planned and that too with an apple as he boasts on his return to Hell.

...him by fraud I have seduced
From his creator, and the more to increase
Your wonder, with an apple; he thereat
Offended, worth your laughter, hath given up
Both his beloved man and all this world,
To Sin and Death... (PL X, 485-490)

But Satan is wrong about his conclusions. He has not seduced 'Man' to *their party* as he planned first. He has only succeeded in seducing him away from his Creator. His spiritual loss is so complete here that his intellectual powers do not enable him to foresee God's providence for Man through the Son. Nor does God abolish 'his own works' as Satan expected. If at all God has abolished any of his creations, it is only his host and himself that have been abolished. His calling God "their God" (II, 368) and his words "worth your laughter" at God's being offended show that Satan's 'abolition' from Heaven is complete and that his powers of intellect do not help him nor does his 'public reason', but they earn only eternal damnation.

If his first encounter in Heaven has landed Satan in Hell with loss of angelic 'form' and strength, his second encounter in Eden has distanced him from Heaven with the loss of his intellectual vigour, too. It is this Satan, then, dimmed and deprived of radiance that sets out to tempt Christ in the wilderness. If readers find the brief epic—its characters and style—prosaic and less heroic, the reason seems to be, not that the poet has parted company with his rebellious Satan—as they would like to presume—but that Satan has become the 'old serpent' and his degradation has almost divested him of his diabolic energy. His stratagem at the pinnacle proves to be the last nail in his spiritual coffin, for his temptation ends in Christ's 'standing' and in his 'falling'. Intellectual arrogance divorced from virtue and faith, as Milton shows, can lead him nowhere but to a fall.

In view of its vast design Kamban's epic affords greater scope for presenting such stratagems. Almost all the strategic tricks in *Kambarāmāyanam* are portrayed as being resorted to by the forces of evil as in *Paradise Lost*. As usual, Surpanaka starts the chain of tricks and cunning stratagems by attempting to carry off Sita, as Comus starts such a chain in the Miltonic world. Failing in her design she causes the second and more central stratagem by Ravana when she says:

O King, you the imperial overlord of this Universe, why do you sink like this? Go and snatch her.⁴²

Instigated by Surpanaka—a proper person to do so as she herself is consumed by the fire of lust—Ravana sets off in his aerial car

to the forest. He compels Marisa to go and lure away Rama and Lakshmana in the form of a golden deer and when this is done he goes to Sita's cottage, lifts the whole cottage up and carries it off with Sita in it to Lanka.⁴³ His planning of the strategy is so complete in every detail that he succeeds in his nefarious attempt. We see here powers of the intellect in the service of evil design.

In addition to and consequent upon this treacherous design, Ravana resorts to another strategy. While the war is going on, Ravana also pursues his efforts of forcing Sita to accept his advances. He causes one of his warriors (Maruthan) to assume the shape of king Janaka, Sita's father, and makes him implore Sita to accept Ravana's hand lest she should cause her father's death.⁴⁴ She does not, however, acquiesce. Undeterred in his unrighteous efforts, Ravana attempts another cunning trick. He asks his servant maids, to take Sita in an aerial car to show Rama and his forces lying dead on the battleground.⁴⁵ Ravana is not successful even here, because although Sita laments over the death of her husband and his army, she does not abandon her faith and does not give in. With this the strategic efforts of Ravana come to an end. And his son Indrajit attempts one more chance by devising a ruse of killing a false Sita before Hanuman, and of leaving for Ayodhya to destroy the royal family of Rama.⁴⁶ It is intended to drive Rama and his army into despair so that they would leave Lanka, abandoning Sita for Ravana. But even this fails when Vibhishna discomfits Indrajit's strategy by revealing his secret plan of performing the 'Nikumbala' sacrifice.⁴⁷

When Kamban shows that the strategies of Ravana however ingeniously conceived and carried out, are bound to fail for the simple reason that they are not only void of virtue, but also directed against virtue, he is following the Tamil tradition. But when Milton does the same with regard to Satan's unsuccessful and unrighteous tricks, he is criticising and correcting, if not totally rejecting, his tradition—particularly the classical—in accordance with Christian ethics.

3. Rhetoric

Rhetoric as an art of persuasion through speech is an aspect of one's intellectual powers. Like disguise, rhetoric also implies the difference between form and content. Milton uses this device

in his epics and other major poems, as applied to dishonest characters who want to deceive their audience. Comus uses this technique to cheat the Lady into accepting his advances. The Lady's firm resistance to his temptations through rhetoric, leaves him defeated in the end. Satan in Milton's epic poems makes effective use of this device in his temptations of the angels in Heaven and Man in Eden.

Affecting equality with God Satan addresses the angels who have assembled before him at his behest, with a view to making them discontented with their subjection to God. Intending to tempt them to rebel against Heaven he says:

But what if better counsels might erect
Our minds and teach us to cast off this yoke?
Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend
The supple knee? (PL V, 785-788)

This is how the Adversary of God starts his 'calumnious art of counterfeited truth' and, the assembled angels have lent their ears. The rhetorical question expects no answer. But the overcareful enemy of God supplied the answer himself lest any 'presumptuous' angel might contradict him:

...Ye will not, if I trust
To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
Natives and sons of heaven possessed before
By none, and if not equal all, yet free,
Equally free; for orders and degrees
Jar not with liberty, but well consist. (PL V, 788-793)

Most of the angels who hear Satan are deceived into believing him. But there is one fervent angel, Abdiel who on hearing Satan's 'bold discourse' on liberty raises his voice of protest and says that as creatures they have to obey God. This resistance only provides a fillip to Satan to continue his rhetoric:

Remember'st thou
Thy making, while the maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now;
Know none before us, self-begot and self-raised
By our own quickening power,... (PL V, 857-861)

So he tells them that as self-begot and self-raised creatures they need not obey anyone and bend their supple knee. But for Abdiel, everyone else has swallowed the bait as is seen from the sound of applause echoing his words. Satan's spirit of defiance sprung from his pride is so tempting that the plain truth of Abdiel does not appeal to the angels. Abdiel's speech is a corrective to Satan's specious arguments. It serves as a caution to the angelic host that they may not unwarily succumb to the temptation. The fact that they fall victims to his seduction even against such warning proves the force of Satan's rhetoric.

Satan displays his rhetorical powers still more brilliantly in Hell. Surveying his comrades in utter stupor in the liquid fire of hell, he summons them to a council and tries to take away from their minds the present agony of defeat and punishment. He starts his speech with 'tears such as angels weep' and trying to revive their drooping spirits says that their strife in heaven 'was not inglorious, though the event was dire'. 'Self-raised' as they are and such united force of gods, how was it that they have met with such repulse? Have I ever 'danger shunned' that we have lost our hopes? Seeing that they slowly recover themselves, Satan dours forth the famous lines:

what though the field be lost?
All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:...

To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power,...
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall;

(PL I, 105-116)

This is high rhetoric, and it goes with a swing. But the argument is barren in that it suggests no action at all but simply brooding on revenge and hate.⁴⁸ Even though there is nothing morally admirable in this speech, it is grandly expressed and the implied suggestion of continuing a fight against hopeless odds is timely, and the angels are filled with some courage. And that is what Satan aims at.

Rising from the infernal lake Satan continues his speech to Beelzebub. Thinking that the angels may regret their rebellion and their punishment in Hell, Satan makes another speech:

Farewell happy fields
Where joy for ever dwells: hail horrors, hail
Infernal world, and thou profoundest hell
Receive thy new possessor: one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be,...

(PL I, 249-257)

Though these lines are lyrical in nature it is meant to be heard by his shadow Beelzebub. Full of ringing phrases, expressed with deliberate sonority, this speech is intended to boost his morale and assert his self-confidence. The same effect is also intended on his audience. But it contains only specious truth. He may be satisfied with the fallen state of affairs. His complacency that he remains the same wherever he is and that his mind is not changed by change of place, is not true. Recognized as an echo of Marlowe's Mephistophilis, these lines have been admired as an expression of profound truth. But, as MacCaffrey has said, Milton does not put truth, except in the guise of irony, in the Devil's mouth.⁴⁹ In the larger context of *Paradise Lost* where 'place' is moral, Satan's assertion is not true. It only amounts to a specious denial of his fall. For, the dichotomy of mind and its surroundings, spirit and flesh, and surface and depth is a state impossible in Heaven or in unfallen Paradise.⁵⁰

Satan is not, as he claims to be, 'still the same' as he was in Heaven. Mind cannot make a hell of heaven without change of place nor vice versa. "What matter where" is an utterly misconceived and misleading term of rhetoric. Because in *Paradise Lost* 'place' matters much. Heaven, Hell and Eden are places of moral significance. The Great Chain of Being—the hierarchy of virtue—hinges upon the concept of 'place' value. If Satan's arguments of 'dissonance' were true, why should he bother about the

'exaltation' of the Son as Messiah? Or why should he try 'with rallied arms' to get 'what may be yet regained in Heaven'?

(PL I, 269-70)

That brings us back to his selfish intentions. Satan's aim is that his followers should be encouraged to continue to be with him, and that their suffering in hell should not make them retrace their steps. This then his rhetoric has achieved for him, as Beelzebub infused with new courage and hope requests Satan to address the whole assembly.

Satan's powers of rhetoric become more evident in his temptation of Eve. Having known the secret of their happiness Satan decides to seduce Adam and Eve by making them eat the forbidden fruit. Having selected Eve for his temptation, Satan draws her attention by becoming a speaking serpent. On gaining her attention, he explains to the wonderstruck Eve that he gained the faculty of speech through eating the fruit of a 'goodly tree'. His rhetorical powers consist not only in explaining the virtue of the fruit in 'glozing, lies but also in his appeal to her weakness for superiority which she has revealed in her arguments with Adam just before her parting from him. The first phrase that Satan uses to Eve is *sovereign mistress* (PL IX, 532). He ends his first speech by calling her 'A goddess among gods' (PL IX, 547). Attracted by the serpent's speech and well-pleased by the apostrophes, Eve falls into his snares by asking him to explain to her how he has acquired the power of speech. This is what Satan wants. 'The guileful tempter thus replied:

Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve,

Easy to me it is to tell thee all

What thou *command'st* and right thou shouldst be obeyed:

(PL IX, 568-570)

(italics for emphasis)

Since rhetoric is an art of verbal persuasion, and since any communication to be effective needs first a willing disposition on the part of the 'decoder', the 'encoder' should establish a friendly relationship with the former. Flattery is one of the effective devices in this regard. Repeatedly she has heard that Man is superior to woman, and that she should obey Adam as he should

obey God. She herself has accepted this hierarchy and has so far obeyed Adam 'unargued'.⁵¹ Besides, Adam's reluctance to allow her to go for separate gardening in that she is weaker, has made, psychologically speaking, some inroads into her self-worthiness. She herself says:

The willinger I go, nor much expect
A foe so proud will first the weaker seek. (PL IX, 382-83)

It is in such a mood that Eve is sought by so proud a foe. Satan's very submissive reply calling her an 'Empress' and willingness to 'obey' her 'commands' make her well-disposed towards the 'Sultan'. She is happy and must have felt proud to hear that there is someone to obey her commands. Hence her willingness to know about his transformation from a brute to a man.

Satan explains to her that the fruit of 'a goodly tree' which he ate recently has raised him to the level of not only human speech but also to that of human powers of reason, 'to speculations high or deep'. He does not stop with the required piece of information. He closes his speech, and blinds Eve's eyes by saying:

But all that fair and good in thy divine
Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray
United I beheld; no fair to thine
Equivalent or second, which compelled
Me thus, ...to come
And gaze, and worship thee of right declared
Sovereign of Creatures, universal dame.

In this last part of his preamble Satan panders to Eve's sense of beauty, a Narcissian tendency we have referred to earlier, an equally strong point of appeal. The terms 'Universal dame' and 'Sovereign of Creatures' at the end of the prelude, appealing to her sense of power and beauty together have almost won the heart of Eve. What remains to be is only an easier enterprise now.

The sly snake then leads our credulous Eve to the prohibited tree. On seeing the tree, however, Eve's elevated spirits droop a while. Referring to the command of God, Eve refuses to go further. Putting 'new part' on and moved to passions, the tempter says that she need not believe those rigid threats of death and that

she will not die as he has not died after eating the fruit but has attained more perfect life than was meant for him. 'God will not punish you for such a pretty trespass that leads to a happier life of knowledge of good and evil' (*PL IX*, 684-697). Then he puts forth his perverse logic:

Of good, how just? Of evil, if what is evil
Be real, why not known, since easier shunned?
God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just;
Not just, not God; not feared then, nor obeyed:

(*PL IX*, 698-701)

The central run of his arguments is somewhat like this: By eating the fruit knowledge of good and evil results; what does God prohibit? To know good? Then it is not just not to allow to know good. If evil is real, it should be avoided; but how to avoid without knowing what it is? God therefore will not hurt you for knowing good for practice and evil for avoidance. If he hurts, then he is not just; if he is not just, then he is not God; if he is not God, he need not be feared nor obeyed.

That Satan knows his arguments to be specious need not be mentioned here. Our purpose is how brilliantly he confuses the thinking power of Eve, still 'an image of God', by the force of his rhetorical ability. Admiration for Satan's oratory is wide of the mark, so far as the readers are concerned, since the poet provides 'corrective comments' just before or immediately after such speeches of Satan⁵² as for example, here an allusion to Classical oratory is made. (*PL IX*, 670-71)

Since Eve's eyes are riveted to the serpent's power of human speech and since her mind is riveted to her problem of becoming superior by ascending the scale of nature to Godhead, the fallacious nature of this logic of Satan does not strike her.⁵³ Satan starts his arguments with forensic insight⁵⁴ from knowledge of good and evil and the resultant death. The arguments sound quite reasonable because the major premise of the proposition i.e., God's Command, is conveniently forgotten. That is, there is nothing inherently good or bad about the fruit as Professor Lewis has pointed out.⁵⁵ It is only a symbol of obedience. The fruit will

not give any knowledge to anyone. Eve's passion for power has blinded her to the command. Only 'knowledge' and 'power' reign supreme in her mind and hence Satan's successful reduction.

Of all the uses of rhetoric in Milton's poems⁵⁶ the one by Satan causes the *Fall* both in Heaven and in Eden, those by fallen Adam and Eve show the postlapsarian nature of rhetoric, while those applied to Comus and Dalila indicate the Pagan properties of speech. No rhetoric is employed by the good angels or by Man before the *Fall*. Such selective use of rhetoric by Milton suggests that rhetoric as a device of communication is undesirable since it runs counter to the principle of moral and spiritual standards of the heroic code that he presents. The fact that Milton personally held such opinion of rhetoric is evident from his critical authorial comments in his epics and other poems besides his unsympathetic remarks on it in his III prolusion.⁵⁷

In Kamban's epic, the hunchback Mandhara and Surpanaka employ the device of rhetoric to instigate Kaikēyi and Ravana respectively to commit their respective blunders. Mandhara incites Kaikēyi the younger wife of King Dasaratha to ask her husband to stop Rama's coronation. When she sees that Kaikēyi does not yield to her temptation but rather presents her with a garland of gems, Mandhara chooses to rouse in her the passion for power and glory. This she does not do straightaway. As Satan chooses to tempt Eve through her weakness for superiority in the scale of nature, Mandhara chooses to tempt Kaikēyi through a far more common weakness of the female world, namely envy of one's co-wife. She tells her how Kausalya, her co-wife will ascend on the ladder of power and glory through Rama's coronation:

O fool thou may'st if thou desire, expose
Thyself along with Bharatha, thy child,
To sufferings of every kind: but I
Cannot endure to be the slave of those
That serve Kausalya, thy cunning co-wife proud.
If Ram is crowned, thy son will have to sit
As a common man upon the floor,...
Kausalya has not been unmindful, sure,
Of her interest and lo, her son will wear

The crown imperial. Poor Bharata!
He is not even dead, he lives!...⁵⁸

But Kaikēyi's affection for Rama and her sense of right are too strong to yield to this sapping and mining operation of Mandhara.⁵⁹ So she dismisses her with threats and curses. The hunchback would not accept defeat. Falling at her feet and saying that she would not desist from advising her in time of her need, she starts her assault again:

If her son rules as king, Kausalya's heart
Would be inflated, her ambitious mind
Would never e'en with owning the earth entire
Be satisfied. What will be left for thee
But what she gives to thee of her own grace?⁶⁰

Having thus far roused her sense of envy against her co-wife, Mandhara turns to another feminine weakness for one's parental glory. She tells her that Janaka so far did not harm Kaikēyi's father Kekaya for fear of King Dasaratha, her husband. But now,

if Ram ascends the throne
Of Oudh, would the father of his wife, the king
Of Mithila withhold his greedy hands
From Kekaya?...
What more? Thou hast by thy neglect brought ruin
Upon thy son, for, be thou sure, if Ram
Is crowned, it will be he alone and his,
Beloved Lakshmana that will enjoy
The sovereign power: think'st thou that others will have
A share⁶¹?

When Mandhara finished her temptation, she had won Kaikēyi's heart. Praising her to the skies, she seeks her help to tide over the situation. Mandhara is ready with her solution of making use of the two boons given by Dasaratha to Kaikēyi. By one she would insist that Bharata should become the King and by the other Rama be sent to the forest for fourteen long years. Jumping at the idea Kaikēyi thanks her maid and sees that her advice is given effect to. Kamban shows the force of rhetoric by bringing about the pivotal crisis of the epic through such a device.

Another equally important crisis brought about through the force of cunning rhetoric occurs in the third Book of *Kambarāmāyanam*. Surpanaka having failed in her attempt to win Rama as her husband, tempts Ravana, her brother to seek the love of Sita. Her description of Sita's beauty is so powerful that Ravana feels intense passion for Sita. While he writhes in the pangs of love and is unable to save himself from its torments, Surpanaka goads him to go and forcefully abduct Sita and bring her to Lanka. That is how Surpanaka gives a violent turn to the main action of the epic plot.

Both the temptations, successfully administered through cunning rhetoric provide essential turning points to the action of the epic.⁶² In view of the fatal consequences that issue from the results of these temptations, the poet brings out the evil nature of such intellectual powers when divorced from the path of virtue.

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL HEROISM IN THE EPICS OF MILTON AND KAMBAN

1. Moral and Spiritual valour

Having presented a critical revaluation of martial and intellectual heroism by applying them to forces of evil, Milton demonstrates his concept of 'better' heroism 'ensampled' by his virtuous heroes. The moral and spiritual aspects of the 'better fortitude of patience and heroic martyrdom which Milton claims to be more heroic than the ones rejected, are discussed in this chapter. In his reassessment of the traditional heroic ethos of the classical epics, Milton pursues, as his 'sage and serious Spenser' does, the moral ends of heroic poetry—to instruct, delight, and move. He achieves this aim by juxtaposing Christian and secular ideals of the hero and by discriminating between true and false concepts of heroism.¹

In accordance with his epic aim of presenting 'higher modes of heroism', Milton constructs his narrative structure in such a way that his heroes are confronted with predicaments which cannot be overcome through martial prowess or even through intellectual abilities. They can be overcome only through moral and spiritual qualities. That is why his heroes Adam and Eve, Christ and even

the tragic hero Samson are presented with no arms. No shield nor spear adorns them. Adam and Eve join hands rather than arms to find a way out; Christ rebuffs the military power of Rome and Parthia rather than accept it in his predicament. What they are really armed with is moral power. The moral decisions are made in virtue of their moral and spiritual strength, especially faith. We would not be far from truth to observe that Milton spiritualizes, (and) psychologizes heroism.² By removing epic conflict from the plains of battle and by putting it into the actions of the individual mind and heart, Milton lays his emphasis on moral and spiritual strength. In his presentation of Christ, Milton shows how such strength can be displayed to solve one's problems. Negatively, Satan shows how one cannot overcome such predicaments through martial and intellectual fortitude.

Under the pattern of the heroic ethos, we have shown that physical fortitude may be approved of as heroic valour if it is employed to serve moral and spiritual ends. This position is acceptable to Renaissance poets like Tasso who in Goffredo presents a warrior hero in the service of Christianity. Milton has not depicted Adam or Christ as Christian soldiers. His epic action does not warrant such portrayal. Taking the passage (PL I, 576-88) where Milton describes the military strength of the fallen angels, Stanley E. Fish argues that military exploits whether by pagans or Christians are devalued by Milton.³ While enumerating the famous warriors of the world of epic and Romance, Milton says:

And all who since, baptized or infidel
Jousted in ... Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, ... (PL I, 582-588)

Taking the conjunction *or* in the phrase 'baptized or infidel' as inclusive rather than disjunctive, Fish comes to the above conclusion and sees in it a rejection of Tasso's position.⁴ Battle decides nothing in *Paradise Lost* as well as in *Paradise Regained*, because battles have no real relationship to the issues involved in these epics. Fish also invites our attention to Michael's answer at the close of the epic to the innocent question by Adam as to how God will defeat Satan:⁵

Dream not of their fight,
 As of a duel, or the local wounds
 Of head or heel; not therefore joins the Son
 Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
 Thy enemy; ...thy saviour, shall recure,
 Not by destroying Satan, but his works
 In thee and in thy seed: (PL XII, 386-390, 393-395)

It is true that Milton's epic heroes do not use physical prowess and they have no need for it. He is not presenting military valour in appreciative colour. Milton's depiction of war in Heaven is, however, military in character. That it is only a narration of war told through the flash-back technique does not seem to answer the question. Another answer suggested by Fish is that it is presented as a 'mock heroic—the heroics of the good angels are also mocked'.⁶ Even this does not meet the question, why does then God allow the Son on the third day to drive the 'fallen' angels out of Heaven by using His thunder? why has not God given the same 'force' to Michael and Gabriel so that they could have driven away the impious crew on the very first day? Why should he reserve the glory of the war for the Son? Milton provides the answer through God.

For thee I have ordained it, and thus far
 Have suffered, that the glory may be thine
 Of ending this great war, since none but thou
 Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace
 Immense I have transfused, that all may know
 In heaven and hell thy power above compare,...
 (PL VI, 700-705)

The answer seems to be that physical prowess or might is not in itself wrong or sinful. The value of war depends upon two things: (1) the nature and quality of the person who uses it, and (2) what is it used for? In this case, it is the Son into whom God has transfused 'immense grace and virtue' and it is God's purpose that the Son is fighting for. It is in this light that Milton portrays the war in Heaven as victorious. Virtue alone can win a struggle, virtue of character and purpose. Blessington is, therefore, quite right in saying:.

Michael of course rejects the excess of heroism, 'rashness', not the heroic spirit itself. Even martial valor has its place if needed by God.⁷

And it is such qualified use of physical prowess which we prefer to style 'moral and spiritual valour' — valour directed to the purpose of moral and spiritual upliftment of man. Another characteristic of this valour is that the hero who exhibits this righteous valour does not claim glory and honour for himself since both the strength and the purpose are God's. Apart from the Son, Abdiel serves as a modest example of such valour. Samson uses his God-given strength to fulfil God's purpose and is shown victorious. Void of physical fortitude, Samson cannot do anything — cannot serve his God. Thus Milton approves of physical valour when it is made subservient to virtue and to the purpose of God.

Kamban's epic has ample scope for depicting martial prowess. Both Rama and Ravana are warrior heroes, but with a difference: Ravana uses his physical fortitude for vicious ends while Rama's battle prowess is only an effective means of achieving higher ends.

Rama's battle prowess consists of his superb skill in archery and of the powerful weapons most of which he has acquired through his obedience and love of virtue from his teachers like Viswamitra and from divine persons like the sage Agastya, Varuna,⁸ etc. How good Rama is in the use of arms, his guru Viswamitra tells King Janaka:

O king, behold the weapons which I taught him to use — weapons that Brahma himself will not find it easy to handle. Think of it, even I who taught him their use, am astonished at the way that they obey his will and arm.⁹

Rama is not physically very strong and, when compared with Ravana and Kumbhakarna he is just an ordinary man. Ravana makes a reference to Rama's such lean physique. When Ravana hurls the trident of Shiva at Rama, Rama's arrows and divine weapon cannot prevail against it. Knowing that mere weapons will not stop Shiva's lance, Rama receives it on his feeble chest pronouncing at the same time the symbolic mantra of *Hum*. The lance hits Rama but breaks into fragments! This wonderful feat of Rama compels words of awe and surprise from Ravana:

Who can this Rama be? He is not Shiv,
 Nor Vishnu, nor the four faced One divine
*As for austerities, he looks not strong
 Enough to mortify his flesh.*¹⁰

(italics for emphasis)

Rama's prowess is not, therefore, entirely based on his physique though expressed in terms of physical fortitude.

Rama uses his skill and weapons for defending *Dharma* or *Aram* and for supporting such of those people who are virtuous. He himself gives expression to his aims of war. Explaining his action of killing Vali, Rama says:

It is my ever-pressing vow to help
 Th' oppressed, the poor, and those forlorn.¹¹

Again, while sending Lakshmana to Kishkindha to speak to Sugriva, Rama says to his brother:

"Tell him", said Rama, 'that the bow which We
 Have bent to 'stablish Righteousness, and end
 All evil ones, unbroken yet doth rest
 In Our hands.'¹²

When Ravana stands in shame after losing everything in the battle in his first encounter with Rama, Rama explains to Ravana that he loses his battle because he is not virtuous. Weapons and art of war are of no avail when they are used in an unjust cause. Rama's words ring through his twenty ears:

Know thou the gods themselves with all their might
 Win not if unjust is their cause.¹³

Rama makes it clear that he is engaged in the war to uphold the principles of *Dharma* and to relieve the gods and the sages from the persecutions of Ravana. Getting ready for the last day's battle with Ravana, Rama says to himself:

This day shall bring an end to Sita's grief
 And suffering of the gods for once and all.¹⁴

Since Rama's war is just and virtuous and since his strength or might does not lie in his physical frame but is the result of the good wishes and blessings of the virtuous, he does not labour in the war. Kamban shows that Rama takes the war just as sport. It is not the epic voice that makes this statement, but it is Ravana himself who has tasted the fruit of his sin at the hands of Rama, that is giving the first hand report of Rama's might and ease as well:

When all my mighty strength was being crushed
By clouds of darts from his death-showering bow,
Think'st thou that there was care in his look? Oh no,
His tranquil face showed careless sport, not war!¹⁵

Indrajit's report to his father about Rama's invincible might in the war reveals like Ravana's report the fact that the might and victory of Rama lies in his virtuous purpose — like the Son's war to fulfil God's purpose. The weapons of the Rakshasas do not have an impact on Rama. We hear Indrajit speak:

If weapons blessed of Him who made the heavens
And earth doth bow to him and turn aside
Harmless, what can our other arms effect?¹⁶

Indrajit has by now come to realize that something is wrong on their side and tells his father bluntly:

Our race has sinned, or such a subtle foe
Arises not for us.¹⁷

All these testimonies are straight from the victim's mouth, from warriors who have subdued not just a city or country but the whole universe — the gods, the demons, and those on this earth. When there is no one to report, the epic voice comes to our help and briefs us of the aim and end of Rama - Ravana war. Ravana lies dead by the darts of Rama. What is it that Rama's dart achieves by killing such a great warrior? The poet speaks:

It quenched his three crore years of mortal life,
It quenched the strength of all his austerities,
It quenched the word of Brahma granting him

Perpetual victory; it quenched his strength
 That bent the world beneath his awful rule;
 It pierced his adamant chest and quenched his life.¹⁸

It is not Ravana the person that is dead; but the pride and passion that shook the frame when alive are killed; the atrocious crimes committed by the frame are quenched and in short, the forces of unrighteousness are destroyed and *that is the purpose of Rama's war.*

Though it is a proclaimed war, Rama does not abandon his moral principles in the conduct of war. He does not attack without ambassadorial efforts to reach a settlement. Nor does he resort to random killing. He does not use his powerful weapons indiscriminately on the enemies. When his brother Lakshmana intends to use 'Brahmastra' the deadliest one on Indrajit, Rama restrains him telling that it would annihilate the whole world — comprising the good and the evil — and Indrajit himself tells his father of this charitable restraint.¹⁹ Of several such acts of moral considerations, the most important is when Rama does not kill Ravana on the first day of war. He can finish his crusade against the evil without further delay. But he does not. Not only that, he advises Ravana that unjust people however strong cannot win. He continues:

Thou hadst

This very day been dead, did not I stay
 My arm for pity's sake, because thou stand'st
 Helpless, alone, upon the field. If canst
 Tomorrow bring the flower of thy troops,
 Or seek in flight precarious safety.²⁰

Even on the last day when Ravana's chariot retreats as he has become unconscious, Rama does not kill him even though his charioteer advises him to kill Ravana immediately. Rama's reply to his charioteer, a celestial driver speaks for his virtuous conduct even at such an hour:

Do not the laws of war, O Matali,
 Forbid the taking of an enemy's life
 When he has thrown away his weapons of war
 And agitated flees for life? The fight
 Doth end today.²¹

It is interesting to recall how the Homeric hero Achilles chased the fugitive Hector three times round the Trojan walls, or how the *pious* Aeneas thrusts his sword into the throat of Turnus even as he is begging for his life, craving pardon!

So this is how Kamban presents the moral valour of Rama in his war against the evil crimes of Ravana. The victory that Rama wins is a victory of wisdom over evil deeds, of knowledge over ignorance and of Righteousness over Sin.²² It is such virtuous victory that makes the poet Kamban feel exuberantly proud to say that he chooses to celebrate the story of the *spotless victory* of Rama in his epic poem.

2. True wisdom

As both Milton and Kamban distinguish martial strength as 'physical fortitude' and 'moral valour' in terms of its use, they also discriminate knowledge as 'vain wisdom' and 'true wisdom' in accordance with the use to which it is put. They portray their 'good' characters as making a virtuous use of their knowledge.

Knowledge should be exercised in such a way that it leads one to righteous deeds. It should enable one to discriminate between the good and the evil. Thus true wisdom consists in employing one's knowledge as an adjunct to good living, not as an end in itself. Mere speculation and academic disputation are at best self-indulgence.²³ That is why when Satan offers knowledge as a source of pleasure, as a way to wealth, rank and fame Christ rejects it saying that "these are false" (PR IV, 291). The Athenian wisdom has not led them anywhere but to themselves. Only Socrates was able to know this and so was the wisest of them all (PR IV, 293-294). Unproductive, scholastic disputes do not attract the truly wise. Milton expresses such a view in his "Seventh Prolusion" where he defends learning which is useful.²⁴ Satan does not however, present to Christ the best of the Classical tradition; offering the Satanic perversion of it, which is all he knows. The Son rejects it because it does not help "the humanely Christian purpose of allaying the perturbations of the mind and inducing the affections to set themselves in right tune."²⁵

Even though Milton uses the terms 'reason' and 'wisdom' more or less as synonyms (PL III, 108) reason, for Milton, is the "capacity to discern truth and right, and wisdom . . . the virtue of preferring them."²⁷ Milton's term 'wisdom' includes the two distinct aspects of intellectual virtue, namely *prudentia* and *sapientia*, the former concerned with temporal objects while the latter with eternal.²⁸ Abdiel in *Paradise Lost* shows his wisdom by making a right choice in rejecting Satan, his immediate superior²⁹ and choosing God's service, the over-all Lord of the angels. The other fallen angels and, Adam and Eve before the Fall make the wrong choice to obey Satan rather than God. As Helen Gardner puts it, Abdiel's return to God "is the soul and supreme image in the poem of contrary choice, of the will to obey, to reject evil and choose good."³⁰

A distinct and an oft-repeated view of Milton in regard to wisdom is the concept of temperance. 'The rule of not too much' (PL XI, 531) is the Miltonic key to real wisdom. He makes Raphael curb Adam's over-enthusiasm by advising Adam:

Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid,
Leave them to God above, him serve and fear; . . .
 — heaven is for thee too high
To know what passes there; be lowly wise:
(PL VIII, 167-168; 172-173)

In spite of such warning Man falls through his passion for 'what matters hid',³¹ and therefore after the necessary revelation of the prospective human history, Michael warns Adam, rather reinforces Raphael's lesson by saying:

This having learned, thou hast attained the sum
Of wisdom; hope no higher, ...

(PL XII, 575-576)

It is such heroic wisdom of 'being lowly wise', shown by the Son of God that vanquishes 'hellish wiles' and regains a 'far happier Paradise within' lost through Man's folly.

In Kamban's epic Vibhishna shows such wisdom. His wisdom consists of both the aspects *prudentia* and *sapientia*, we have just referred to above. He makes a good use of his knowledge of *Dharma* when he advises Ravana in the war-council. He says that it is folly to think that a monkey has burnt down the city of Lanka. It is the fire of Sita's chastity that has consumed our glorious town. He reminds him of his defeat at the hands of Vali and Karthaveeriyana and, of a curse of a woman whom Ravana had earlier attempted to molest.³² This is his sense of *prudentia*.

Vibhishna uses his reason to discern the 'truth and right' and finds that Ravana is false and wrong. He sees clearly that Rama is not only on the side of virtue but that he is an incarnation of *Aram* or *Dharma* and hence like Abdiel he deserts his brother Ravana and joins Rama and finds a brother in him.³³ Dr. Ramakrishnan has already noticed this comparison thus:

If the Son is for Abdiel the manifestation of the almighty, so is Rama for Vibhishna. Vibhishna raises his lone voice of protest against Ravana's defiance of Rama in the same way as Abdiel does against Satan's call for challenge to the Son's exaltation. And Satan's words to Abdiel, "fly, ere evil intercept thy flight" (PL V, 871) have their parallel in Ravana's words to his brother, "If you stand before me, you will perish."³⁴

Kumbhakarna is also well-informed in matters of right and wrong. He has the 'right reason' to discriminate the commissions of his brother Ravana as sinful and the seizure of Lanka by Rama as virtuous. So he advises his brother accordingly, and urges him to retrace his steps. But when Ravana does not listen to his advice he chooses to stay with Ravana rather than to cross the floor. His 'reason' has not become 'wisdom'. There is no use in such abortive wisdom shown by Kumbhakarna. He chooses 'social amity'

before *agape* with full knowledge of what he does in more or less the same way as Adam prefers *eros* to *agape*.

Vibhishna on the other hand, has the wisdom and courage to reject the bond of brotherhood with Ravana and joins the universal brotherhood of Rama. Though at the moral level — the level of social amity — Vibhishna's desertion of Ravana may invite harsh criticism, at the spiritual level, his preference is a mark of his spiritual wisdom leading to his salvation, which is not "so much decreed as secured, won inch by inch by the cumulative exercise of moral intelligence turning towards righteousness."³⁵

3. Humility and Obedience

Milton and Kamban depict humility and obedience as antithetical to pride and disobedience. Having shown the latter pair as unheroic by applying them to their counter-heroes, these epic poets portray their heroes and other characters in their epics as humble and obedient.

Paying tribute to Milton for his clear understanding of the peculiar traits of the Christian ethics, particularly of humility, Emerson says that true greatness is a perfect humility.³⁶ Humility as a Christian virtue facilitates obedience in the mind of a person. It helps one unwind his path, in the fallen world. It is a redemptive virtue. To put it vividly: pride resulted in the Fall; the Fall is paradoxically an attempt to ascend higher than man's 'natural' level in the 'scale'. In the Fall, Man finds himself at a level lower than his 'natural' level. Now if Man attempts to regain his original level it is not to be achieved by trying to ascend but by trying to descend to a degree as low as the height he had aspired to ascend. In other words, he should descend low enough to slough off his pride which made him aspire higher. His descension should be inversely proportional to his ascension. If pride has caused him to attempt a climb-up, his humility should enable him to climb down enough to win redemption.

Though ascension and descension are discussed here as terms of abstract virtues, the relevance of such theological stipulation is confirmed by facts of experimental science. A stone thrown up 200 feet high from the ground has to travel down the same dis-

tance of 200 feet to reach the ground, its original place. Similarly, if pride has projected man's ambition to as high as Godhead, humility should enable him to climb all the way down to reach and retain his original status. This, man being unable to perform, i.e., unable to be so humble as to merit God's mercy, God sends his Son in the flesh of humility to show by example the way of humility and obedience.³⁷ The Son of God in *Paradise Regained* represents this pattern of heroism by being as humble as God wills and by rejecting honour, glory, power and wisdom offered by the world in the figure of Satan. Even at the height of his victory over Satan when the angels are jubilantly praising his victory,

... he unobserved
Home to his mother's house private returned.

(PR IV, 638-639)

And that is the pattern of humility which has won man's redemption.

Abdiel in *Paradise Lost* and the Son in *Paradise Regained* are shown as humble and obedient from start to finish in their spiritual career as far as it extends in Milton's epics. If Abdiel is an example of perfect obedience in regard to the creature-Creator relationship, the Son is an exemplar of filial obedience.

In *Paradise Lost* the chief heroic virtue is obedience. Milton who is interested in the origins of heroism rather than its outcome, finds "the source of spurious heroism in 'Man's first Disobedience' and of true heroism in 'one man's firm obedience fully tri'd'.³⁸ Even though 'Man's first Disobedience' is the subject matter of *Paradise Lost* he does not portray it as a heroic virtue but rather shows how unheroic it is in bringing about the Fall. We have already discussed how disobedience by Adam and Eve has caused their fall.

The virtue of obedience is stressed throughout *Paradise Lost*. Almost all the major characters of the epic have some relation to this virtue or to its antithesis. To begin with, God announces His command to Man:

Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,

(*PL VIII*, 324-325)

Then comes the Son of God who is "the only heroically obedient person in the poem."³⁹ The poet describes him after he has offered himself for man's redemption:

His words here ended, but his meek aspect
Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love
To mortal men, above which only shone
Filial obedience:

(*PL III*, 266-269)

This is a crucial passage in the epic as it shows the hierarchical superiority of obedience. That is, the Son's obedience is superior to his charity. Noting this, Fowler adds that according to Milton's hierarchy of virtues, obedience must be superior.⁴⁰ Its importance lies also in the fact that Adam's fall consists in not maintaining this hierarchy. To put it in other words, in his crucial moment Adam should have chosen obedience to God rather than his love for Eve, just as the Son shows first obedience to God, his natural superior and then only his love for mortal men who are his natural inferiors. Adam reverses this order and hence the inevitable Fall.

Unlike Satan who feels it *infra dig* to obey God, to pay knee-tribute and whom his disdain forbids to obey, the Son feels that to obey God is entire happiness (*PL VI*, 741). In Paradise Adam is provided with everything that he wants. He is to keep only one command of God, just to avoid eating the fruit of a certain tree while there are plenty of trees for his use. This sole command of God he is unable to keep and thus loses Paradise. Placed in the wilderness without any nourishment for many a day, beset by many other tribulations characteristic of the fallen world and above all, exposed to hostile forces, the Son in the 'brief epic' shows obedience to the will of God.⁴¹ Even in such adverse conditions Jesus remains obedient. The Son provides a lesson that obedience is an essential characteristic of the Suffering Servant.⁴²

Milton portrays Adam and Eve as becoming humble and obedient once they recognize the reason of their fall. Michael's revelation and advice make them realize their responsibility and they are now humble and obedient. Adam says:

Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God, ... (PL XII, 561-562)

Eve does not lag behind. "Feeling her evil, she is sorry and begs Adam's forgiveness and God's. ...She submits her fate perfectly to his."⁴³ She is quite clear about her place and role in the moral hierarchy of *Paradise Lost*. So she says:

now lead on;
In me is no delay; with thee to go,
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me
Art all things under heaven, all places thou, ...
(PL XII, 614-618)

In resigning herself to her lot and in obeying Adam by being happy to follow him wherever he goes, Eve has submissively assimilated Michael's exhortation (PL XI, 290-292). Michael's assurance that Adam and Eve will be redeemed by the Son of God, and Milton's portrayal of the fallen pair as once again becoming humble and obedient show that Milton's pattern of genuine heroism consists in obedience. Milton emphasizes the heroic status of obedience when he begins his 'brief epic':

I who erewhile the happy garden sung,
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience... (PR I, 1-4).

Like the epic hero Adam, Samson the heroic Nazarite also learns the lesson of obedience after his fall. As Jesus obeys the 'strong emotions' Samson obeys the 'rousing motions' in him, which is the conscience placed by God in Man as his guide (PL III, 194-95). He obeys the conscience, God's umpire and submits to God's will by going to the Philistines as Adam is prepared to leave the Paradise, with a richer Paradise within himself.⁴⁴

Milton thus portrays obedience as the essential heroic virtue of his poems; it is for Milton the virtue of all virtues.⁴⁵ It is shown as the moral principle of *Paradise Lost*. Its importance as a moral and spiritual virtue lies in the fact that it maintains and sustains

the network of relationship between the divine, the human and the natural planes of being.⁴⁶

Kamban's epic i.e., the world represented by Kamban in his epic is not governed by such religious and theological aspects of obedience with hierarchical stipulations or obligations. Obedience is a virtue in both the worlds of Ayodhya and Lanka. But like all other virtues obedience is also subsumed under *Aram* in *Kambarāmāyanam*. It is as an aspect of *Aram* then that Kamban portrays this virtue in his epic.

Almost all the characters in the world of *Ramarajya* are depicted as humble and obedient. Even Kaikēyi and the hunchback behave obediently by accompanying Bharata to the forests to fetch Rama back to Ayodhya. Rama of all these, serves as a perfect example of obedience in its several phases. He is obedient to his teachers and elders besides his parents. When confronted by Thadaka as the holy sacrifices are going on, Viswamitra, the 'guru' asks Rama to kill her. Rama hesitates because 'his whole being revolts against killing a woman'. He does not think it proper to kill a woman in his maiden battle. Reading his mind, Viswamitra tells him that Thadaka is not a woman, but a voracious cannibal, and commands Rama to slay the monster. Kamban describes Rama's response:

Thus enjoined the worthy prince spoke;
 "When you bid me do a task,
 Be it righteous or not,
 Esteeming your word as of Vedic canon,
 I will execute your command;
 For, O Sage, this unto me is virtue's path."⁴⁷

This is an example of Rama's implicit obedience; just obeying his teacher without any argument. This is in Balakanda, the first Book of the epic, where Rama is still a disciple (*Sishya*).

When Dasaratha the king asks Rama to relieve him of the burden of ruling the country by taking over the rule of Ayodhya, Rama accepts it without any argument. When the king orders he has to obey; and apart from this, Rama accepts it, being the eldest, as his duty to accept the responsibility. He is not jubilant

over the decision nor is he elated by the thought of becoming a king. The poet describes Rama's sense of duty when he accepts the offer:

When his father spoke thus, the lotus-eyed (Rama) neither desired nor disdained the crown. He realized that it was his duty to accept it. He was aware that discipline for him consisted in carrying out the monarch's command. So he agreed to shoulder the responsibility.⁴⁸

If Rama accepts the King's order with neither joy nor sorrow, how does he take the reversal of the order procured and proclaimed by his step-mother? Kaikēyi says that she only conveys his father's command to him that Bharata should rule the country and he should live the life of a hermit in the forests for a span of fourteen years and then come back to Ayodhya. What sort of answer would any prince, now the king-designate make to such an unnatural order? The order is against the canons of *Dharma*. Even the cruel Duryodhana in the *Mahabharata* another great epic of India, promises Pandavas their share of kingdom on their return from the forests. Kaikēyi does not even seem to think of Rama's status after his return. She simply says, 'you should return after a duration of fourteen years'. This is how normally any prince will deliberate on hearing such order. What does Rama do? The poet says:

E'en were it not my father's royal will,
He said, 'would Rama thy son transgress thy word?
And Bharata's fortune, can it ever be
Less dear to me than mine? I say no more:
I take thy blest command a sacred duty;
Behold, this very day I start and take
My leave.⁴⁹

"So saying he bowed down at her feet, pressed them to his eyes, saluted the direction where his father lay unconscious and turned towards his mother's palace"⁵⁰ to bid her good-bye. The poet lavishes his superb poetry in this context to describe Rama's sense of equanimity and his sense of perfect humility and obedience.⁵¹

Such an obedient disciple, prince and son does not, however, obey certain orders whoever may be the person giving the orders, if they contradict or cost the principles of *Dharma* which he holds dearest to his heart. For example, Vasishta who has instructed Rama in the arts of war and peace says, "If I were the one who taught you many an art, obey this day my order that you should return to Ayodhya to rule over the country."⁵² This takes place in the forests, in the last canto of Book II of the epic. Rama is no more a boy who obeyed Viswamitra without argument in spite of his conscience counselling against his action. Rama is now a maturer man, learning lessons through adversities in life and with a conviction of well-settled principles. In keeping with such developed vision and wisdom, Rama refuses to obey his own 'guru,' much greater than Viswamitra. He answers very politely and humbly, but firmly:

O the dear son of Brahma, be it the teacher, the parents, the kind-hearted or the sons — can any one of these refuse to do things once promised to perform?

I have taken orders first from some one and I have promised to obey them. Now second comes your order not to obey the first. Tell me, O the great one, what should I do in such circumstances?⁵³

The great sage kept quiet 'seeing no solution to offer', and this proves the validity of Rama's stand.

There are still several occasions different in degree and nature where Rama observes obedience. Several also are the persons in the camp, like Lakshmana, who are depicted as symbols of obedience. Rama's obedience, as Kamban shows us, is thus willing, sincere and complete and yet never at the cost of *Dharma*. As the Son is governed by the Father's purpose and command, Rama is always governed by his love of the principles and purposes of *Dharma* or *Aram*. It is in this sense that Rama is considered as the *Incarnation of Dharma* (KR 3:176).

Kamban's epic portrays many of its characters as humble and submissive. Of all such characters, Bharata is depicted as a personification of humility. His sense of humility never deserts

him whether he is dealing with his parents or elders or even with strangers like Guha. His utmost humility is however, shown to Rama whom he considers as his father, mother, brother and 'guru'—all in one.⁵⁴ That is why, when Rama refuses to return to Ayodhya before the stipulated time is over, and presses Bharata to return and rule the country, Bharata requests Rama to give his sandals as a token of his rule.⁵⁵ When Rama hesitatingly gives them he places them on the throne and runs the country as a regent of Rama. This is an unsurpassed example of humility and sacrifice making the character of Bharata in *Kambarāmāyanam* as one of the most sublime examples of moral heroism.

4. Faith

As humility enables one to submit to his 'natural superiors', faith in a system or order that governs one's life enables one to withstand temptations. Faith is one of the weapons that can never fail in 'the wilderness of this world'.⁵⁶ But one should have it to face the wilderness. Milton's Eve becomes the first 'infidel' in that she loses faith in God's command:

I have set
The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
Amid the garden by the tree of life,
Remember what I warn thee, ...

(PL VIII, 324-327)

Adam has passed on this command to Eve and all of its implications (PL IV, 419-439). In spite of such warning information, Eve falls through her lack of faith. Credulously believing the lies of Satan, Eve wants to (her action amounts to that) test God's Word. She is misled by Satan's false logic administered through Athenian oratory. "The truths of revealed religion are not hypothetical and do not need testing. Eve did not need to test, by the use of reason, God's statement that if she ate the forbidden fruit she would die."⁵⁷ Distrust in the divine veracity and a proportionate credulity in the assurances of Satan make her eat the fruit and thus she breaks the pledge of obedience and faith. The poet anticipates the event that the hapless Eve will be sent back "despoiled of innocence, of faith, of bliss" (IX, 411). Adam learns how Eve has put to test God's words and her own faith in the 'event perverse'. He resolves on behalf of both of them:

Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
 The faith they owe; when earnestly they seek
 Such proof, conclude, they then begin to fail.

(PL IX, 1140-1142)

If Milton shows through the negative example of Eve that faithlessness brings about one's fall, he also shows how the prevenient grace of God provides the penitent an opportunity for refinement and regeneration. After granting the Son's interception for the fallen man, God declares:

after life

Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined
 By faith and faithful works, to second life,
 Waked in the renovation of the just,
 Resigns him up with heaven and earth renewed.

(PL XI, 62-66).

Eve however, recovers her hope and faith when she tells Adam towards the end of the epic that she is prepared to go anywhere with him and she is happy and contented to do so. "She trusts the future, she trusts Adam, and she trusts herself."⁵⁸ And this trust puts her back on the equilibrium which is her regeneration.

Milton demonstrates in his *Samson Agonistes* how faith procures regeneration even in an utterly hopeless situation. At the beginning of the drama we see Samson in utter despair grown out of his sin and nurtured by his unknowingness of God's unstinted grace. How God can create good out of evil is evident from the fact that the wily temptation of the selfish Dalila and the jeering challenge of Harapha turn out to be a blessing in disguise. Following his successful resistance to these temptations, Samson feels the 'rousing motions' in him which, he believes, dispose his thoughts to something extraordinary (SA 1381-1383). The Hebrew Champion, the heroic Nazarite regains his hope and submits himself to the will of God. Milton presents through Samson's example the truth that those who put faith in God are always blessed with God's grace. It is Samson's heroic faith that makes his regeneration possible and complete and that averts his becoming a tragic hero. His is a death of noble martyrdom with calm of mind all passion spent.⁵⁹

If Eve and Samson are depicted as fallen heroes, attaining regeneration through affirming faith in God's Providence, Abdiel and the Son are portrayed as symbols of unassailable faith. Abdiel's lonely example among the revolted angels, of implicit faith in God establishes a pattern of genuine heroism.⁶⁰ Commending Abdiel for his loyalty the poet says:

So spake the seraph Abdiel faithful found,
 Among the faithless, faithful only he;
 Among innumerable false, unmoved,
 Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified
 His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
 Nor number, nor example with him wrought
 To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind
 Though single. (PL V, 896-903)

Abdiel is a symbol of single loyalty. He obeys God whether he is alone in doing so or in group. Loyalty can be kept with legions as well as 'single'.⁶¹ Such faith wins commendation from God Himself who says, "Servant of God, well done." He wins God's love; for, faith is an existential assurance of God's love.⁶²

The best exemplification is the Son of God who has shown the path of virtue as a Suffering Servant. Faith is one of the heroic qualities which are represented by him. Like Samson before him he also feels some 'strong emotions' in him. He feels that he is led somewhere. He does not enter into rational arguments with it. His "emphasis on faith rather than knowledge"⁶³ becomes evident when he says to himself:

And now by some strong motion I am led
 Into this wilderness, to what intent
 I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know;
 For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.
 (PR I, 290-293)

Still more trying example of Christ's faith occurs when Satan as a last endeavour lifts him aloft and puts on the pinnacle to tempt him. Quoting from the Scriptures, as the proverb goes, Satan tempts Christ to seek God's help to avoid his dashing his foot against any stone while falling. (PR IV, 556-559). With absolute faith in the Father, the Son replied:

Also it is written,
Tempt not the Lord thy God, he said and stood.
But Satan smitten with amazement fell. (PR IV, 560-562)

Milton depicts through his characters the Son, Abdiel, Eve and Samson the better kind of heroism of faith and heroic martyrdom that he claims to do in his exordium to Book Nine of *Paradise Lost*. Faith is shown in all the above cases as a redemptive virtue, winning the grace of God.

Kamban's epic has no occasion to portray the virtue of 'Faith' in such a religious and theological perspective as Milton's epic does. There are none the less occasions in the Tamil epic when many of the characters show their sense of faith in certain principles of virtue. Their faith is so unshakeable and unassailable that they do not hesitate to die in its cause. There are several moral principles depicted in the epic as faithfully adhered to by their votaries. All such moral principles are in the Indian context included in the term *Dharma*.

Dasaratha for example, has faith in the principle of Truth. When Kaikēyi confronts him with her requests to make Bharata his successor and send Rama in exile, Dasaratha is torn between his love for Rama and his faith in Truth. Seeing that his efforts to make Kaikēyi give up her claims bear no fruit, Dasaratha gives up his life rather than his faith in Truth and thus dies a martyr's death. Kaikēyi succeeds in her attempt not because of the justness of her cause but because of Dasaratha's abiding faith in the principle of Truth.

Rama the hero of the epic is also portrayed as having faith in many a virtuous principle. First of all, he has robust faith in his parents, including Kaikēyi who seeks his banishment. It is his faith in her goodness that he accepts her orders without questioning their validity. Again, when Lakshmana is filled with anger and prepares for a battle to crush all opposition and make Rama the king, Rama pacifies his wrath saying:

They blame not streams if water sometimes fails; blame thou not then our king, nor her our mother: 'Tis fate that drives us on, my brother! Why then this rage?⁶⁴

This shows Rama's faith in the order of Fate, as a decree of which he accepts his exilement and does not find fault with anyone. Besides his parents, Rama has infinite faith in his brother Bharata. During their stay in the forests, Bharata goes in search of Rama's abode in the forests. Lakshmana who is guarding the abode happens to see from the top of a high hill Bharata coming towards them with an army behind him. Again he rages and tells Rama that Bharata has come to oust him even from out of the forests. Rama listens to him quietly and then says:

It is thy love to me, brother, that makes thee blind to Bharata's virtues. I regard the Vedas themselves as no more than commentaries on Bharata's life. Is it the part of wisdom not to see that it is his love for me that draws him here? ... Can'st thou suspect thus our Bharata, the touchstone of honour, the very God of supreme Virtue?⁶⁵

Again when Lakshmana speaks to Rama condemning the conduct of Sugriva in bringing about the death of his own brother, Rama expresses his love for Bharata in moving words:

... If all
Were 'like in their devotion to their brothers,
How can my Bharata be placed the first
I' th' list of loyal brothers?⁶⁶

These words of Rama indicate not only Rama's brotherly faith in Bharata but also the fidelity of the latter for the former.

Rama's faith is not limited to such dear and near persons alone. He has complete faith in the wisdom of Hanuman, in the wisdom and goodness of Vibhishna, and in the principle of 'Sharnagati' i.e., the principle of offering succour to those who have sought refuge, irrespective of the fact whether they are friends, neutrals or even foes. The best example of such faith is provided by Rama when he accepts Vibhishna into his camp amidst protests from his faithful supporters, saying that whether we stand to win or lose, we should protect those who have sought our succour. That is our duty par excellence.⁶⁷

5. Resistance to Temptation

In keeping with his ideal of portraying moral and spiritual heroism Milton presents in his major poems conflicts between moral and spiritual virtues and their opposing vices. Milton has no sympathy for 'fugitive' virtues. A virtue should meet its opposite, resist its snares and emerge successful in the combat. This view is expressed in his *Areopagitica*:

As therefore the state of man now is, what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear, without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.⁶⁸

Each of the major poems, therefore, as Professor Summers has put it, "concerns temptation or the significant trial of the hero, for it only such trial which makes heroism necessary; it is only by means of such trial that the nature of heroism can be made manifest."⁶⁹

The Lady in *Comus* is confronted with a trial of her moral integrity by Comus, the Circean tempter. Disguised as a 'harmless villager' Comus takes the Lady to his enchanted palace and having seated her in an enchanted chair tempts her with a glass of drink. The Lady left alone in the forest credulously believes him to be an honest 'shepherd'. Since moral and spiritual struggles are to be undergone by the individual, isolation of the person to be tempted is a thematic necessity. Milton provides such isolation in temptation in his works with "that instinctive clarity of the artist in which moral awareness grows with aesthetic recognition."⁷⁰ The brothers of the Lady leave her alone in search of some 'repat'. In *Paradise Lost* the separation is arranged with far greater skill and Eve too faces her temptation alone. In *Paradise Regained* Christ finds himself in a wilderness isolated from the outer world and left alone to face the spiritual temptation by

Satan. Samson's blindness provides the necessary isolation of the hero to be tempted. The chorus, though softly steals upon him, and is present, does not take part in the heroic resolution.⁷¹ Thus all of Milton's heroes are 'singled' out when they face their temptations. This is an index to his artistic insight.

With Kamban, moral and spiritual temptation is not as central a thematic aspect as with Milton. There are nevertheless one or two instances of temptations that are structurally knitted into the epic plot of *Kambarāmāyanam*. The temptation of Kaikēyi by Mandhara, temptation of Rama by Surpanaka, Surpanaka's temptation of Ravana and Ravana's temptation of Sita are the important instances of temptations presented by Kamban. Like Milton, Kamban also depicts the temptations in such a way as to isolate the combatants from others. Mandhara the hunchback tempts Kaikēyi when she is alone. Surpanaka chooses to tempt Rama in the guise of a celestial damsel when he is alone in the forest. Although Surpanaka tells Ravana of Sita's matchless beauty while he is in his court, her actual temptation of goading him to abduct Sita takes place in the palace later when they are alone.⁷² The abduction scene in 'Panchavati' — a pseudo-temptation — matches the scene of Eve's separation from Adam. The poetic strategy creates a ruse of the golden deer by which Ravana is able to carry off Sita to Lanka. It is interesting to note that both Milton and Kamban have shown more or less identical artistry in arranging the temptation scenes in isolation.

Comus tempts the Lady with an offer of oriental liquor in a crystal glass. This temptation of gluttony, the Lady overcomes by her virtue of temperance. The 'gay rhetoric' of Comus is unable to seduce the Lady who, in virtue of her sage and serious doctrine of chastity (*Comus*, 785-86) withstands the 'brewed enchantments', 'vizored falsehood' and 'base forgery' (695, 697) of the 'foul deceiver'. The Lady however, is not able to get over her predicament by 'the sun-clad power of chastity', as she relies on her self-sufficiency. It is the grace from above in the form of the Attendant Spirit that at last disenchant her captivity. This is in contrast to the other instances of temptation. Faith in one's self-sufficiency is not a virtue of Christianity. Eve's faith in her own intellectual prowess brings about her fall. Successful resistance to temptation

as in the case of Abdiel, Christ and Samson depends on their faith in the Lord, in Providence. In fact all temptations are a testing of one's faith in God. The web of *Comus* does not seem to be thematically as complex and involved as the moral and spiritual patterns of heroism in the mature works of Milton. It just represents youthful triumph over intemperance — gluttony and lust — as the essence of its heroic conflict (974-975).⁷³

Adam and Eve are not able to resist their respective temptations. Eve fails to resist the temptation through her lack of faith in God, transferring trust instead to herself⁷⁴ and to the words of Satan. Adam fails through uxoriousness. Thus Adam and Eve put together as Man are tempted through their gluttony (their eating of the apple greedily), vainglory (aspiring to godhead which they do not merit), and desire for full knowledge (inquisitiveness for knowledge).⁷⁵ Ascending to or attempting to ascend to Godhead, Man fails to resist temptations. Jesus on the other hand descending to manhood ('avatar') resists the same three aspects of temptation and shows the way to the race of Adam and Eve: where Adam and Eve fell by aspiring to be gods, the Son of God triumphs by staying human. The 'perfect man' remains man.⁷⁶

As their best hope of salvation rests in Adam's maintenance of proper authority, his yielding to personal feeling in allowing her to do gardening separately does involve a definite failure of his larger spiritual responsibility.⁷⁷ Later when he joins Eve in her fall by preferring her love as against God's love, Adam displays a desire for a purely personal fulfilment unrelated to any higher dedication, a desire which in Milton's symbology is the temptation of Circe.⁷⁸

There is a peculiarity about the circumstances in which Eve is tempted when compared with others. The Lady in *Comus* knows that she is being tempted. She says:

Fool do not boast,
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, ... (*Comus* 661-663)

Adam knows quite well that Eve has ruined him with her, "for with thee/Certain my resolution to is die" (*PL IX*, 906-907). He has

no doubt that the link of nature draws him towards her. The poet is careful to remark,

... not deceived,
But fondly overcome with female charm.
(PL IX, 998-999)

Jesus is quite aware that he is being tempted by Satan:

Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art? (PR I, 356).

Still more vividly the Son recognizes 'the thief of Paradise' and speaks to him in disdain:

And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee accursed, now more accursed
For this attempt bolder than that of Eve,
And more blasphemous?
(PR IV, 178-181)

Samson knows beyond doubt that he is being tempted by Dalila and is well aware that his father is attempting to provide him a life of luxury, sloth and ease while Harapha is challenging his faith. Lastly, Abdiel knows that he is, along with other angels in the Quarters of the North, being seduced by Satan. Not only does he refuse to be seduced but he also advises Satan:

Cease then this impious rage,
And tempt not these; ...
(PL V, 845-846)

Of all these five persons who are tempted, Abdiel, Jesus, Samson and the Lady successfully resist their temptations with full knowledge of being tempted and by whom. Adam knowingly falls. Eve is the lonely figure who is *deceived*. She does not know the serpent to be Satan. She does not even know that she is fallen until Adam completes it and until they feel the consequences. Hence the epic voice:

O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve,
(PL IX, 404)

The uniqueness of Eve's experience is significant in that it is due to her credulity that all the other temptations — the only exception being Abdiel's — are brought about. If Eve is not fallen

there is no Fall; if there is no Fall, then there is no descent by the Son of God to earth as a man. In view of the spiritual consequences her fall becomes the *felix culpa*.

In Kamban's epic, Surpanaka tells Rama of her identity, though she lies about her change of form and her intention. But Rama knows well that she is up to some deceit and that she is false in her form as well as in her design.⁷⁹ Ravana knows that he is being informed by Surpanaka about the beauty of Sita. Ravana is not blind to the fact that what Surpanaka suggests is something sinful or at least not morally acceptable to a person of his stature. Sita though at the beginning does not know the identity of her hermit-guest, comes to know of his identity quite soon by his words and his own strange physique. Of these, Rama and Sita resist their temptation. Ravana like Adam fails to resist through his passion. Kaikyēi, on the other hand like Eve, *does not know* that she is being tempted by her servant-maid. Except for some initial hesitation as in the case of Eve, Kaikēyi fully believes her tempter; and not only that, when the temptation is over, and the bait is swallowed, she is all praise for Mandhara as Eve is all praise for the tree and Satan. Above all these strands of similarity it is to Kaikēyi's fall that the very plot of the *Rāmāyana* owes its birth. Without her becoming a victim to the hunchback's seduction no *Ramarajya* is possible. In view of the infinite good that Rama is to do for mankind by his example, Kaikēyi's revolt becomes the *felix culpa* in the *Rāmāyana*.

There is another similarity in the presentation of the temptations of Eve and Kaikēyi. The Lady rejects the offer of the drink by Comus without entering into argument with him. Outright rejection of the evil is always good. There is no use in arguing with one who is essentially a person of perversion and is a known evil. The Lady is correct in saying :

Fain would I something say, yet to what end ?
 Thou hast no ear, nor soul to apprehend
 The sublime notion, and high mystery...
 And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know...
 Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced ;

(Comus 782-791)

Enchanted as she is, bodily of course, she is not in a position for detached debate. Milton's contemporaries were of the view that "Satan for them is to be recognized and rejected, not, necessarily, to be argued with. To enter into debate with the devil is to give your little finger which means in the end giving him your whole body."⁸⁰ But this is exactly what Eve does, and falls. It is true as we have seen earlier that she does not know that the serpent is Satan, but she does know that she is being tempted to eat the forbidden fruit (*PL IX*, 647-54) and hence should have avoided him. Kaikēyi also makes the same mistake of arguing with Mandhara. Unlike Eve, Kaikēyi knows the person who is tempting her, but does not know that she is being tempted—again unlike Eve. Once she enters into argument, the tempter reads her mind and adjusts her stratagem accordingly.

If *Paradise Lost* shows how Man failed to resist temptations, *Paradise Regained* shows how man can resist any temptations offered by Satan. As Eve fails through her lack of faith, *Paradise Regained* starts with Satan's temptation of Christ in regard to faith. "Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust?" (*PR I*, 355) retorts Jesus. Starting with faith, Milton preserves "the traditional equation between those temptations Christ withstood and those to which Adam and Eve succumbed."⁸¹ Apart from proving Christ's faith in the divine providence for those hungering in the wilderness to which he alludes in his reply to Satan (*PR I*, 350-351), this temptation is so cunningly offered by Satan that Jesus may, in his mercy for human suffering due to hunger, accept his proposal and fall. The cause of Christ's incarnation being the Son's humanitarian concern for the human race, Satan resorts to this offer with hope of his fall.

Next, Satan tempts the Son with 'restorative delight'. It is a parallel to Eve's temptation of the apple; to her greed and covetousness. The contrast is both interesting and instructive. Eve at the time of her testing, has not been starving while Christ is starving for forty days; Eve is not in the wilderness like the Son, but is in the happiest of gardens, Eden; and Eve's fruit is a forbidden one whereas the Son is not tempted with such fruit. Satan knows the situational difference between Eve and Jesus:

Alas how simple, to these cates compared
 Was that crude apple that diverted Eve ! ...
 What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?
 These are not fruits forbidden, no interdict
 Defends the touching of these viands pure,
 Their taste no knowledge works, at least of Evil,
 But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
 Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.

(PR II, 348-49,368-373)

Satan thus tempts the temperance of Jesus. Jesus is not moved by these 'specious' gifts saying that these are not 'gifts but guiles(391). Christ, like the Lady rejects even such "restorative delight" with a temperance invincible (II, 408).⁸² "Christ's refusal of the banquet derives" observes Barbara Lewalski, "from his recognition of the giver: this is the Devil's table,... As the new Israel, Christ will not fall away into idolatry as did the carnal Israel, and the Devil's table, scorned, promptly testifies to its true origin by vanishing away"⁸³ 'With sound of harpies' wings, and talons heard' (II,403).

Satan next tempts Jesus with wealth and kingdoms as a means of achieving high designs and high actions on which all his (Son's) heart is set as Satan believes. These do not appeal to the Son. Declaring therefore that these are "the toil of fools, / The wise man's encumbrance if not snare" (II, 453-54), Christ rejects riches and realms. Christ's reason for rejecting the realm is worth observing for two reasons. First, he prefers ruling of the soul rather than the body by opting to guide the nations,

To know, and, knowing worship God aright,
 Is yet more kingly, this attracts the soul,
 Governs the inner man, the nobler part,
 That other o'er the body only reigns, ...

(PR II, 475-478)

His preference for the welfare of the soul over the body is unmistakable and reminds us of the purpose of his incarnation—to redeem the soul. The second reason put forward by the Son is that he prefers to give kingdoms rather than receive them from others. Greatness of the soul consists not in receiving but in giving : The Son explains :

Besides to give a kingdom hath been thought
 Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
 Far more magnanimous, than to assume.

(PR II, 481-483)

It is a magnanimous sentiment indeed partaking of the Son's charity. Rama's willingly laying down the kingdom at the behest of the mother and politely refusing to reassume kingship when requested by his brother Bharata, pressed by his relatives and ministers and even when ordered by his 'guru' Vasishta, reflects the same sentiment of charity. Bharata expresses such heroic charity when he refuses to rule the country, and Guha's admiring praise of Bharata on this score is no exaggeration.⁸⁴

Christ rejects similarly the temptations of 'glory' and 'wisdom' offered by Satan. He rejects them for the same reason for which he rejects riches and realms i.e, both for themselves and for his reason (II, 484-485). This temptation has again the analogy of Eve's passion for glory and wisdom, her eating of the fruit of knowledge. The Son rejects glory because he seeks not his glory but His who has sent him there. He likewise rejects Athenian wisdom offered by Satan to make him famous :

Think not but that I know these things, or think
 I know them not; not therefore am I short
 Of knowing what I ought ; he who receives
 Light from above, from the fountain of light,
 No other doctrine needs, though granted true ;
 But these are false or little else but dreams,
 Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.

(PR IV, 286-292)

Milton drawing close to the end of his 'brief epic' depicts the last temptation of Jesus by Satan who bodily lifts the Son of God, famished as he is at the end of forty days of fasting, and places him on the pinnacle of the temple. Satan expects two lines of action that Jesus may take to overcome the predicament. Physically weak and exhausted, Christ on the pinnacle may feel dizzy and stagger out of sheer weariness, resulting in the physical fall. Satan asks him to stand, "if not to stand/cast thyself down"

in the hope that he as the Son of God will be borne aloft by the angels as 'it is written'. If the Son of God, to avoid the physical fall, resorts to invoke the aid of God as suggested by Satan, he is then tempting God, the Father, as the Son. This would amount to his spiritual pride. Christ is then mentally tested for *hubris*.⁸⁵ Christ resists this 'mental assault' by simply replying to Satan :

Also it is written,
Tempt not the Lord thy God, ...

The Son of God means to say to Satan, "Do not tempt your God." But there is no God there to be tempted, only the Son of God is there. Does the Son of God call himself God? If so that is what Satan exactly expects from the Son—an assertion of spiritual pride which has overthrown him (Satan) from Heaven. Will the Son of God who has been all along his human career rejecting glory, fame, and show of miracles (turning the stones into bread), now resort to assert his glory? Will the 'Saviour meek', 'Queller of Satan' (*PR* IV, 634-636) try to assert his pride of being the God? Will the Son to whom obedience to the Father is more important than charity now aspire to be called himself God? Or will Milton, the poet depict the Son of God at the end as priding over his god-head while he is still a man?

All such questions do not expect affirmative answers. Nor would they be in keeping with the spirit of the poem. Many an interpretation has been offered by scholars of mature wisdom and critical sensibility.⁸⁶ Northrop Frye who takes this passage to be ambiguous offers an interpretation which seems to concur with the text and the aim of the poet. Adding the result of the temptation, the passage reads :

Tempt not the Lord thy God, he said and stood (*PR* IV, 561)

The conjunction identifies the person who 'said' and the person who 'stood' as one and the same, and thus the passage means :

Christ said, "Do not put the Father to unnecessary tests"⁸⁷
and stood on the pinnacle of the temple.

Professor Frye now interprets it :

For Milton, Christ, having resisted the whole of Satan's world, has done what man can do : ...The only possible next step is for God to indicate acceptance of what has been done. Thus the fact that Christ successfully stands on the pinnacle is miraculous, but not a miracle drawn from his own divine nature, not an ace hidden up his sleeve, which is what Satan is looking for. It means that his human will has been taken over by the omnipotent divine will at the necessary point,...⁸⁸

More recently Professor Arthur E. Barker has expressed a similar point of view in explanation of this crux. Accepting this passage as indeed a difficult saying Barker says:

Clearly he has come to recognize fully the implications of his Incarnate Sonship; and many critics have read the statement as a now justifiable assertion of his own divinity, of the God that is in him,...⁸⁹

Thus Christ once more and finally displays his obediently faithful trust in God without any tinge of pride. Having driven Satan out of the temple of his own mind and body, Christ is now ready to repeat the process for each human soul.⁹⁰

Milton's interest in the theme of temptation as a device of moral and spiritual purification has made him present Samson's regeneration in the form of successful resistance to temptations. Samson is presented with three confrontations coming one after another closely testing him. Samson brushes aside his father's offer of ease and comfort, amounting to the temptation of sloth. He accepts the punishment inflicted in the prison as necessary expiation for his crime of shameful garrulity. Dalila offers him the most crucial of his temptations. Being no longer uxorious, Samson is no more affected by her blandishments and feminine charm. He is now able to break through "all opposition/And all temptation" (SA 1050-51). No more is he swayed by 'female usurpation nor dismayed' (SA 1060). The third temptation is offered by Harapha who comes to taunt Samson. Samson's trust in God is assailed by Harapha's discouraging harangue. But Samson affirms his faith in God when he says confidently:

All these indignities, for such they are
 From thine, these evils I deserve and more,
 Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
 Justly, yet *despair not of his final pardon*
 Whose ear is ever open; and his eye
 Gracious to readmit the suppliant;
In confidence whereof I once again
 Defy thee ...

(SA 1168-1175)

(italics for emphasis)

Commenting on these lines Douglas Bush has very succinctly brought out Samson's revival of faith:

Perhaps the most impressive testimony to Samson's renewed faith is this humble confession to a contemptuous enemy.⁹¹

It is not Samson the strong giant that interests Milton, but the penitent hero who undergoes his sufferings with heroic patience and who successfully resists the temptations of ease and luxury, female charm and the deadliest one of despair. It is the suffering Samson that has appealed to Milton as an example of Christian heroism.

This is how then Milton portrays the aspect of heroic resistance to temptation in his works. How much importance Milton attaches to this aspect of moral heroism is evident from the prominent place he has given to this aspect in all the four long poems, *Comus*, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*.⁹²

6. Patience

Patience in the Miltonic concept does not mean mere putting up with hardships and calamities as unavoidable misfortunes. It means rather a psychic struggle in which the protagonist can escape such hardships by choosing a course of action contrary to the principles in pursuance of which the suffering lies. The protagonist chooses, therefore, to suffer willingly the hardships which attend on his love of the principles of virtue. It is this kind of patient suffering loftier in kind and greater in degree that Milton prefers to depict as the "better fortitude of patience."

Even though Milton uses his classical tradition of the heroic ethos mostly as a foil to his concept of higher modes of heroism, he finds some aspects of the classical heroism to be approximating to his concept of the heroic. Successful resistance to temptation is one such aspect of heroism which Milton could possibly adapt from Odysseus and Aeneas. Similarly patient endurance of one's hardships without lamenting over one's misfortunes is an aspect which Milton could equally draw on his classical sources. If Odysseus' power of endurance relates to physical and intellectual hardships, Aeneas shows a kind of endurance that relates to moral and spiritual struggles. Blessington finds in Odysseus' power of patience, "a model of Christian behaviour ... adaptable to the ethics of Christianity...Coming closest to Christ Himself."⁹³ It would have been better if he had compared the *pious* patience of Aeneas which is more akin to that of Jesus in terms of the moral and spiritual (though in a limited sense) conflict involved.⁹⁴

Milton's concept of patience is found expressed in his *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. In his bigger epic Milton puts forth his claim that to raise the name of Epic (IX, 43-44), he needs 'higher argument' and that is

the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom. (PL IX, 31-32)

In keeping with this claim, Milton makes his hero give expression to the lesson he learns at the end of his career in Paradise :

...suffering for truth's sake
Is fortitude to highest victory, ... (PL XII, 569-70)

Adam learns this lesson not by practising it but through the apocalyptic wisdom offered by Michael at the behest of God. His heroism consists in understanding the nature of true heroism, in his preparedness to accept the punishment for his disobedience, in his willingness to leave the Paradise, possessing a happier paradise within him and in taking the solitary way into the world with patience as his weapon and providence as his guide. Adam's heroism will not be complete without Eve's acceptance of the situation. Eve being responsible for the loss of Paradise, Milton makes her surrender to Adam's will and to be prepared to follow him with patient resignation:

but now lead on;
 In me is no delay; with thee to go,
 Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
 Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me
 Art all things under heaven, all places thou, ...
 (PL XII, 614-618)

Domestic order thus restored, ensures Cosmic order, and hence Man's victory over the evil forces within him results in the possibility of the restoration of Paradise.

Structurally speaking, the heroic virtue of patience as demonstrated by Adam and Eve is not so dramatically knit into the narrative structure of the epic, as are their earlier act of disobedience and their impatient mutual recriminations. Nor is it aesthetically and even thematically appropriate for the poet to do so, as he is singing only the *loss of Paradise*, not its restoration. It is such subdued tone of the epic action that has invited thematic misgivings from critics like H.R. Swardson:

Does Milton really think he is singing 'the better fortitude of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom'? Where? What space and prominence does he give to it?⁹⁵

In answer to the above question Mary Ann Radzinowicz replies that the answer is, then, in the last two books. The better fortitude is in Adam himself, in Abel, in Enoch, in Noah, in Abraham, in Moses and in Christ; and the effect of their choices is steady and cumulative.⁹⁶ True patience, as Michael teaches Adam, is an inner fortitude to bear 'either state, prosperous or adverse' (PL XI, 361-364). Adam at the end has achieved this fortitude when he says:

Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong
 Life much, bent rather how I may quit
 Fairest and easiest of this cumbrous charge,
 Which I must keep till my appointed day
 Of rendering up, and *patiently attend*
My dissolution. (PL XI, 547-552)

(italics for emphasis)

Grounded in unassailable faith it is really more heroic than enduring one's physical hardships or displaying physical courage in battle.

Milton portrays patience as a heroic virtue in his *Paradise Regained* as applied to Jesus. If Adam's heroism consists in his understanding the significance of patience, Christ's heroism consists in demonstrating the virtue by practising it in a real-life situation. In fact, Christ of *Paradise Regained* enunciates by his example almost all the virtues recommended to Adam by Michael as making the sum of Christian life. Michael advises Adam:

This having learned, thou hast attained the sum
Of wisdom; hope no higher, ... only add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance, add love
By name to come called Charity, the soul
Of all the rest: (PL XII, 575-576, 581-585)

Paradise Regained shows how such knowledge of virtues is translated into 'deeds'. The implications of pursuing the path of patience and the nature of suffering that entails such a path are clearly expressed by Christ:

I shall first
Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
What I can suffer, how obey? Who best
Can suffer, best can do;
(PR III, 188-195)

It is not the martial trial that Christ is prepared to face, but a trial wherein his moral and spiritual faculties are in full play. To put up with 'insults, contempts, scorns and snares' requires greater strength of mind and spirit than the one required to face blows, swords and arrows. This inner struggle is occasioned by temptations and is assisted by faith in resisting such temptations. From the point of view that what *Paradise Lost* claims to be heroic virtues

are exemplified not in *Paradise Lost* by Adam but in *Paradise Regained* by Christ, *Paradise Regained* may be called a thematic sequel to *Paradise Lost*, as *Manimēkalai* is considered such a sequel to *Cilappathikāram* in Tamil, with the difference that the Tamil epics are by different poets.

The concept of patience as a better fortitude is not entirely Miltonic in origin. William O. Harris shows in his essay "Despair and 'patience as the truest fortitude' in Samson Agonistes," that the concept "was a traditionally Christian pattern of ethical thought."⁹⁷ Discussing Sidney's *Arcadia* in the light of John F. Danby's comments, Harris concludes:

The plan of the *Arcadia*, then, suggests that patience is "the prime virtue, man's prime necessity too" ...⁹⁸

Lodowick Bryskett, a Christian humanist of the sixteenth century has also held such view of patience. Discussing various kinds of fortitude he places patience, the blessed virtue above others. Harris quotes him saying of patience:

Who so beareth stoutly aduersities, deserueth greater commendation and praise then they which ouercome their enemies, or by force win cities or countries, or otherwise defend their owne.⁹⁹

Though not original in the conception of the concept, it is Milton who has first raised it to the level of an epic virtue and announced it so proudly in his epic.

Milton appreciates this virtue so much that he presents Samson also as possessing this quality to an astonishing degree. He patiently listens to the cunning and hypocritic speeches of Dalila and the taunting sarcasm of Harapha. He accepts this abuse as a deserving punishment for his earlier betrayal of faith of God reposed in him. In the beginning, he shows little patience with his degraded condition and desires speedy death (650). The Chorus advises patience as the truest fortitude (654). The Chorus extols the virtue of patience as a saintly quality. Samson at the end is shown as denuded of all passions. He is chastened and sublimated

through suffering.¹⁰⁰ Milton portrays in Samson a sublime example of heroic regeneration founded on absolute faith and maintained through patient suffering.

Though persons like Bharata, Sita and Rama in Kamban's epic do show patience in enduring their sufferings, theirs is not comparable with the virtue that Milton depicts in his works, for Milton's is a purely Christian virtue with an unmistakable connotation of spiritual suffering and as such, is different from the patient endurance of Rama, Sita and Bharata. Moreover, Rama's patience in enduring the separation of Sita and Sita's patience in enduring the pangs of separation from Rama are better subsumed under the virtue of chastity, while Bharata's self-imposed sufferings for his brother's exile finds a place under charity.

7. Repentance

Like patience, repentance is also a Christian virtue. It forms an essential intermediary step between the human nature to err and the divine nature to forgive. Like patience again, repentance lies on the unwinding path of fallen man's efforts. That is to say, if man's pride and disobedience have landed him in the Fall, humility and repentance will redeem him from it. Tears of contrition draw God's love more readily than tears of joy expressed in the course of thanksgiving. The Son, as an 'advocate' for Man expresses the effect of repentance thus:

See Father, what first fruits on earth are sprung
From thy implanted grace in man, these sighs
And prayers... I thy priest before thee bring,
Fruits of more pleasing savour from thy seed
Sown with contrition in his heart, than those
Which his own hand manuring all the trees
Of Paradise could have produced, ere fallen
From innocence.

(PL XI, 22-30)

As a redemptive virtue, repentance results from humility, and faith in God. Of the two sets of beings that fell, the angels are unable to receive pardon because, they cannot shed their pride. Satan becomes remorseful once and, in spite of his knowledge that he will be pardoned if he repents, his pride does not allow him to submit:

... is there no place
 Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
 None left but by submission; and that word
 Disdain forbids me, ... (PL IV, 79-82)

So he bids farewell to remorse and he knows what it means:
 "all good to me is lost".

The human pair on the other hand will to choose the path of repentance. God's prevenient grace provides pardon for the penitent; it does not however, influence man's will, but leaves it free whether or not to repent. So, just as God's foreknowledge does not cause Man's Fall, His prevenient grace also does not force him to repent. Christian liberty is so liberal either way. If Man affiliates himself/with Satan in Disobedience and, falls, he disaffiliates from Satan in choosing to repent, and attains redemption.¹⁰¹

Of the human pair Eve is the first to recover from despair and to suggest repentance even as she is the first to sin. Eve seeks Adam out where he lies lamenting on the ground. She is not repulsed by his bitterly cruel speech. With tears still flowing, she falls at his feet and embracing them pleads with Adam not to forsake her:

thy suppliant
 I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not,...
 both have sinned, but thou
 Against God only, I against God and thee,...
 (PL X, 917-918, 930-931)

These words of Eve show that she is already in the path of repentance. Of the five stages of repentance which Milton describes in his *Christian Doctrine* (Columbia Milton, Vol. XV, p.385), Eve has by now crossed the first three, viz., conviction of sin, contrition and confession. Having accepted the responsibility for the sin, she suggests that she would go to the place of judgement and with her cries importune Heaven to absolve Adam and punish her alone for her being the 'sole cause'.

This speech of Eve melts Adam's hardness both towards her and towards Heaven. He pities Eve. He humbly admits his sin in allowing her to be exposed alone to temptation. He is prepared

to bear the punishment by himself which he thinks could not be altered. So Adam accepts the justness of God's justice, but he is yet unable to recognize God's mercy. He however, recognizes that the best course open for them is to strive in 'offices of love' to lighten each other's burden. His more 'attentive mind' sees the futility of the suggestion by Eve of abstinence or of suicide. His reason for negating the suggestion is that it

Cuts us off from hope, and savours only
Rancour and pride, impatience and despite,
Reluctance against God and his just yoke
Laid on our necks. (PL X, 1043-1046)

This is the fourth stage of repentance, *i.e.*, 'departure from evil'. Since self-destruction will only end in defeating God's purpose of bruising the serpent's head by the seed of Eve, and since anything that they do against the will of God is sin, Adam's stand against Eve's suggestion is a 'decision of departure from evil'. The final stage of repentance is 'conversion to good'.

It is true that Eve in her sweet repentance leads Adam out of their utter ruin; it is she who inspires Adam to repentance and patient resolution and it is she by her submission to Adam that shows the way by which they may both find pardon.¹⁰² But her sense of repentance cannot take her beyond certain stage; and it is Adam's 'more attentive mind' that finds a solution to make their repentance complete. Departing from the evil, Adam shows his conversion to good when he along with Eve goes to the place where they were judged and, when they

prostrate fall
Before him reverent, and both confessed
Humbly their faults, and pardon begged, with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek.
(PL X, 1099-1104)

As the prevenient grace has removed the stony heart and in its place 'made new flesh regenerate grow', they are able to pray and repent. The human reconciliation has thus paved the way for Man's

reconciliation with God. The discord between the two levels of 'being' is removed by 'offices of love'. Milton's portrayal of this reconciliation through acts of love and humility displays the moral and spiritual integrity freshly gained by Adam and Eve. "To a Christian", observes David Daiches, "the courage to repent represents a finer, and a more difficult, heroism than mere stubbornness, ..."¹⁰³

Kamban's epic does not portray repentance as an aspect of heroism. Repentance as an ethical trait is not, however, foreign to Indian aesthetics. *Kambarāmāyanam* portrays one or two instances of repentance. Rama commits an error of understanding when he follows the false deer as desired by Sita, in defiance of his brother Lakshmana's advice. The death of the deer in its real form of a Rakshasa opens Rama's eyes to his fault. On his way back to the cottage he realizes his mistake and praises the wisdom of Lakshmana thus:

Ah, wise, verily wise is my dear child, the life of my life, the soul of my very soul.¹⁰⁴

When Lakshmana is held under the spell of Indrajit's 'Brahmastra', a divine weapon, Rama is broken down and laments over his death (as Rama mistakes the effect of the weapon). In the course of such lament, Rama says that he has to lose his brother thus because of his indifference to Lakshmana's advice regarding the false deer. He repents his uxoriousness that led him to such calamities (VI, 23:70, 71). Sita also has occasions of repentance. She repents her folly of inducing Rama to follow the false deer, and of forcing Lakshmana to go to the help of Rama as the false alarm raised by the dying Rakshasa indicated some danger to Rama.

Even though the instances are few, Kamban emphasizes the significance of repentance as an admirable moral virtue by depicting the hero and the heroine as penitent. If Milton portrays repentance as an aspect of spiritual heroism, Kamban depicts it as an ethical virtue.

8. Chastity

Milton celebrates 'Wedded Love' in his *Paradise Lost* as the source of many virtues. It is the true source of human offspring; all the affections of father, son and brother were first known by it. It is the opposite of the false love shown by harlots and in 'court amours'. And wedded love 'has driven adulterous' lust from men (*PL* IV, 750-767). Apart from this panegyric passage Milton does not deal with 'chastity' in the sense of pure, loyal and just love between a man and a woman. It is in *Comus* that Milton has elaborately dealt with the virtue of chastity. Even though some critics like Marjorie Nicolson¹⁰⁵ think that *Comus* is not basically about chastity, and that it deals with the triumph of virtue over vice, the majority of Milton scholars are in favour of A. S. P. Woodhouse's stand that the central theme of *Comus* is chastity.¹⁰⁶ Some other scholars like A.E. Dyson are of the opinion that it celebrates the virtue of virginity, not chastity.¹⁰⁷ Clarifying his position after some illuminating analysis of this virtue, Woodhouse partly concurs with Dyson that the doctrine of chastity in *Comus* culminates in 'the sage and serious doctrine of virginity'.¹⁰⁸ The Lady being a virgin and Comus's assault being on her virginity, the critics tend to consider the poem as dealing with the virtue of virginity. Chastity means sexual purity. It may be premarital or marital. *Comus* celebrates the triumph of sexual purity in a virgin over the vice of incontinence. It is in such an aspect, therefore, that *Comus* can be said to have chastity as its main theme.

The chief aspects of chastity as described by Milton are as follows: Firstly, chastity is in itself a strength and protection to the person who possesses it:

a hidden strength
Which if heaven gave it, may be termed her own: ...
She that has that, is clad in complete steel, ...

(*Comus* 417-420)

Secondly, by way of reinforcement angels guard chaste persons against evil spirits or persons:

So dear to heaven is saintly chastity,
 That when a soul is found sincerely so,
 A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
 Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
 And in clear dream, and solemn vision
 Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear, ...

(*Comus* 452-457)

The Attendant Spirit descends from its starry mansion to guide and guard the Lady under the quick command from sovran Jove (41). It is with the help of this Spirit that the brothers of the Lady are able to find out their sister and release her from the enchantments of *Comus*.

Another salient aspect of chastity that Milton presents in *Comus* is that it faces trials and tribulations. To be meaningful it has to be exposed to vice and emerge successful in its combat with vicious forces. Milton glorifies the militant aspect of chastity through the speeches of the Elder Brother. Milton shows in this connection that the forces of virtue may be attacked and sometimes they may be taken unawares, but they can never be subdued however powerful the evil forces may be.¹⁰⁹ Says the Elder Brother:

Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,
 Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled,
 Yea even that which mischief meant most harm
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory. (*Comus* 588-591)

Because of such apotheosis of chastity in its pristine form of virginity, *Comus* has received glowing tributes from critics and thinkers alike. In the opinion of Emerson *Comus* is "the loftiest song in the praise of chastity that is in any language."¹¹⁰

Apart from such glorification of the virtue of female chastity, Milton also has given expression to the necessity of chastity in men. Milton argues in his, *An Apology for Smeectymnus*:

...If unchastity in a woman, whom St. Paul terms the glory of man, be such a scandal and dishonor, then certainly in a man, who is both the image and glory of God, it must, though commonly not so thought, be much more deflowering and

dishonorable; in that he sins both against his own body, which is the perfecter sex, and his own glory, which is in the woman, and, that which is worst, against the image and glory of God, which is in himself.¹¹¹

So the need for maintaining a chaste life whether for a woman or a man is a moral imperative with Milton.¹¹² It is such Miltonic emphasis on the bisexual nature of chastity that has appealed to social historians like Sybil Oldfield who emphasizes Milton's idealism in respect of justice, self-dedication, sexual love and the free play of intellect.¹¹³

If Milton has presented an idealized form of virginal chastity in the *Lady*, Kamban portrays the impeccable virtue of chastity as exemplified by Sita in his epic. In view of the cultural and the generic differences Milton has limited his portrayal of chastity to enunciating some of the aspects. Kamban has no such limitations; rather the same factors—the culture and the genre—have given him ampler scope for treating chastity in an elaborate manner.

At the very outset, in the very first stanza Kamban emphasizes the fact that the country of Kōsala is free from the crime of adulterous love. Menfolk do not allow their passions to go astray; nor do the eyes of the womenfolk cast lascivious looks on men.¹¹⁴ This is in contradistinction to the state of affairs in the realms of Lanka and Kishkindha where the very heads of the State namely, Ravana and Vāli have set their passionate eyes on others' wives.¹¹⁵ In specific terms, chaste love is glorified in *Kambarāmāyanam* as an important epic virtue, while adulterous love as we have seen earlier, is condemned as the most heinous crime.

The Tamil term *Karpu* meaning chastity in general is an untranslatable cultural concept. "It is not merely wifely chastity and faithfulness, although it is the most important element in its connotation. It is, in addition to absolute fidelity in thought, word and deed, absolute devotion, absolute deference and regard, absolute submission and self-effacement on the part of the wife towards her husband."¹¹⁶

Chaste women would not like to be parted from their husbands. They would willingly share the fortunes of their spouses whether

weal or woe. Sita is not worried that Bharata will become the king and even that Rama will leave for the forests. But she is unable to think of remaining alone at home without Rama. To Rama's dissuading remark that her tender nature will not stand the 'stony wilds that burn like molten-wax', Sita replies:

But can the stony wilds ... burn more than separation from my Ram?¹¹⁷

Before Rama could frame any reply, Sita hurries to her apartments, dresses herself as a 'sanyasini' and without a word more stands by his side ready to follow him to the forests.

Pent up in a grove of Ashoka trees, and surrounded by Rakshasa women like a deer in the midst of leopards Sita is full of sorrow for her separation from Rama. She does not care for a change of dress; nor does she move about from the place of her confinement. Her eyes keep raining a perpetual shower of tears; her form has become lean and emaciated. She looks like a beautiful picture smoked; like the moon eclipsed and like a lotus killed by frost.¹¹⁸ As we have seen above while surveying the Tamil epic tradition (p. 68), chaste wives do not adorn themselves with flowers, jewels, etc., while their husbands are away. The picture of Sita conforms to that tradition.

Sita feels sorry that she is unable to attend to her lord Rama's domestic comforts. She laments: who would prepare and serve food for my lord? How would he grieve when he has guests?¹¹⁹ Sita pines very much that she has lost the opportunity to serve her husband. She spends her days and nights alike in thinking of Rama, and his several virtues. This scene of Sita's pathetic expression of her love for Rama is one of the superb pieces of poetry (V, 3).

The forte of Sita's chastity lies, however, in her successful resistance to the temptations of Ravana. Ravana tries his best to make her yield to his desires. Neither his requests and submissive implorings nor his threatenings that he would destroy her and all those in Ayodhya and Mithila have any effect on Sita. Seeing her quite adamant in her resistance, Ravana leaves her with a warn-

ing that she is given two months' time within which she should make up her mind to yield to him, and failing which he would kill her straight.¹²⁰

Kamban's Sita relies on the strength of chastity while resisting the advances of Ravana, but she does not make use of it as it would diminish the reputation of her lord, Rama. She does not, therefore, like the Lady in *Comus*, say to Ravana anything about the 'hidden strength' of her chastity. The Lady in *Comus* being a virgin is right in referring to the sun-clad power of her chastity.¹²¹ Sita on the other hand warns Ravana of Rama's might while Ravana continues to harass her:

Think not I love my wasted form, think not I love my life.
Think not that I fear to die....It is not fear of death that
makes me live and endure thy hateful words. The hope of
once again seeing my blessed lord — whose ornaments are
his virtues — it is this alone that reconciles me to life. I long
to see the day when, with Lakshmana guarding his holy
person, his arrows shall send thee to the other world; and
that is why I do not end myself.¹²²

This is how Sita explains her being alive even after months of separation from her husband. It is her love for Rama that sustains her body and spirit. It is this love that gives her strength and spirit to rebuff the 'false Janaka' who begs her to accept Ravana. She is firm that she would not swerve from the path of virtue even if he (Janaka) along with his kith and kin were put to death by Ravana under her very nose; nor would she yield to him in fear of her own death (VI, 16:67).

Sita's steadfast love and fidelity to Rama is not confined to her present life alone. Her love and wifely attachment is so deep and sincere that she requests Hanuman to convey to Rama her prayer that she be granted her wish to be his wife even in her future life. Sita's virtue of chastity is here portrayed by Kamban as transcending the limits of the flesh, and birth. In Kamban's epic conjugal fidelity culminates in the spiritual affinity of the persons concerned. Besides setting an example of an ideal wedded love, Sita's love for Rama shows how, as in the case of Kannaki, a physical

relationship can lead, if properly maintained, to a spiritual union. In short, the virtue of chastity sublimates *eros* into *agape*. This is one of the chief contributions by Kamban to the glory of the concept of *karpu* as an essentially distinctive feature of Tamil Literature.¹²³ It is largely due to such tradition of chastity in his concept that Kamban portrays Ravana as carrying the whole cottage with Sita in it to Lanka whereas the original version says that Ravana catches hold of Sita, places her on his lap and hurries off to Lanka in his aerial car.¹²⁴ That a chaste lady should not be physically touched by others is the aspect of chastity that warrants Kamban's deviation from his original. It is with this view that Sita refuses Hanuman's request to transport her on his back to Rama and, rather conveys her message to Rama thus:

Remind him of the solemn vow he made
That day he took my hand in wedlock rite:
"Not e'en in thought will I in this my life
A second woman touch;" he swore to me:
Drum these words in his ear.¹²⁵

If Kamban follows his tradition in his depiction of Sita as a lady of impeccable chastity, he also creates a tradition in making Rama take the vow of chastity on his very wedding day. No poet in Tamil literature before, has given such a picture of male chastity. Rama's vow of chastity is proverbial in Indian culture. It is, however, Kamban who has made it a pattern of male chastity by categorically describing Rama as taking the vow.

It is very interesting and instructive to note that as Milton stands alone in advocating male chastity (though in a prose tract), Kamban is the first epic poet to emphasize this virtue as an essential trait of moral integrity, owing to the lack of which great warriors like Vāli and Ravana, otherwise good and admirable, have lost their life and reputation.

9. Charity

"Charity begins at home" is a well-known saying. Milton demonstrates in his epic *Paradise Lost* how charity as an ethical and spiritual virtue originates from Adam's love for his Eve. A.G. George says:

To him [Milton] conjugal love at its best, is the culmination of one's love for the other person, the supreme illustration of love for one's neighbour, than which there is nothing

greater. The sexual factor in marital love is subordinated to the ontological possibility of being united with another being. ...The solidarity of a united brotherhood between man and man, and the communion of fellowship are essential ingredients in the meaning of God's image in man.¹²⁶

In the prelapsarian state Eve finds happiness in the beauties of Eden only in the company of Adam. To her neither the 'breath of Morn', nor rising sun, nor herb, fruit or flower, nor grateful evening, nor silent night, nor the glittering starlight is sweet without Adam (*PL* IV, 650-56). The same spirit of fellowship Eve expresses after the Fall also when they are about to depart from Paradise:

with thee to go,
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me
Art all things under heaven, all places thou, ...

(*PL* XII, 615-618)

Eve has now understood that her happiness consists in her union with Adam, that wherever Adam goes becomes her Paradise, and that even Paradise will become a wilderness without Adam. Adam in the most critical moment of his career in Paradise feels that he cannot live without Eve in Eden which becomes in her absence 'wild woods forlorn' (*PL* IX, 908-910). Their exit from Paradise, "hand in hand with wandering steps and slow" confirms the solidarity of their communion sufficiently cemented to bear the fruits of their sin during their sojourn in the world that was all before them. Sita's decision to follow Rama to the woods in spite of her knowledge of the difficulties of a life in forests shows her love for Rama's fellowship. Hence the Indian adage: Where there is Rama, there is Ayodhya.

If Adam and Eve show a sense of charity at the moral level, the Son in *Paradise Lost* shows by his example the perfection of charity at the spiritual level. He offers himself to save man from damnation. When God asks whether there is anyone prepared to become mortal to redeem man's mortal crime, all the heavenly choir stood mute; "on man's behalf, patron or intercessor none appeared" (*PL* III 213-219). It is only the Son who comes forward:

Father, thy word is past, man shall find grace; ...
 Behold me then, me for him, life for life
 I offer, on me let thine anger fall;
 Account me man; I for his sake will leave
 Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
 Freely put off, and for him lastly die
 Well pleased, on me let Death wreak all his rage;

(*PL III*, 227, 236-241)

The Son's offer of himself to save man has no parallel example of charity in the history of epic heroism. The gods in the epics of Homer and Virgil do offer some help to their human 'pets', but neither Thetis nor Athene is able to save Achilles or Odysseus in the end.¹²⁷ Milton creates a tradition here — a tradition of heroism which concerns 'deeds/Above Heroic, though in secret done'. The highest heroic act, created by Milton, is the free acceptance of suffering for the love of another, typified by the offer of the Son of God, the Redeeming Hero.¹²⁸

The Son's acts of charity begin at the very day he delivers God's judgement to Adam and Eve:

then pitying how they stood
 Before him naked to the air, that now
 Must suffer change, disdained not to begin
 Thenceforth the form of servant to assume,
 As when he washed his servant's feet so now
 As father of his family he clad
 Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain,
 Or as the snake with youthful coat repaid;

(*PL X*, 211-218)

The Son's act of charity does not stop with that. When he sees the penitent human pair falling prostrate at the place of the judgement and praying for God's forgiveness he pleads for them with God as their advocate:

let me
 Interpret for him, me his advocate
 And propitiation, all his works on me

Good or not good ingraft, my merit those
Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.

(PL XI, 32-36)

The Son is all compassion for Man in his fallen condition. "Compassion is the abolition of the closed world of the self... Passing over to other lives is the way leading to compassion; sharing insight with others is the exercise of compassion."¹²⁹ In anticipation of his merciful sacrifice later as Christ when he will be sharing his insights with his followers, the Son now takes the compassionate step towards securing God's pardon for Man.

The Son's offer is antithetical to Satan's offer of himself to make the journey through Chaos to Paradise. While Satan offers himself distended by "monarchal pride", the Son offers in the fullness of charity and love.¹³⁰ While the Son's offer is to save Man, Satan's offer is to destroy Man. While Satan offers through his selfish pride, the Son comes forward through his compassionate love.

Apart from the Son, God also shows charity towards Man both before and after the Fall. His justice is tempered with mercy, for even though Man is humble enough to repent in a spirit of contrition, he cannot go it alone on his merit; that is, without God's Prevenient grace, he cannot repent (PL XI, 3). Hence even for repentance God's mercy is essential.¹³¹ Anchises' advice to his son Aeneas 'to spare the suppliant and cast down the proud', is not followed by the Virgilian hero. Killing of Turnus even as he is pleading for his life is considered by critics as an uncharitable act of vengeance. Granting that Turnus was proud, Aeneas butchers even other soldiers who appeal to his pity clasping his knees. Anchises' words are taken to be the epic voice of the Roman virtue, but the 'epic image' falls short of it. The Son in *Paradise Lost* on the other hand not only spares the suppliant Adam and Eve but also offers himself as the Redeemer for them, while he casts down the proud Satan and his host. Thus Milton extends, baptizes and internalizes the prophecy of Anchises by elevating the plane of action from political and moral levels to the spiritual.¹³²

In Kamban's epic Rama and his brothers display the virtue of charity. Rama's love for his parents is unquestionable. He

loves his mother Kosala as well as his step-mothers Kaikēyi and Sumitra. He obeys King Dasaratha and loves the father in him. Kamban takes special care to portray Rama's love for Kaikēyi to show that Rama has no ill-will towards her despite the fact that it is she who procures his exile. To show that Rama was very attached to Kaikēyi, Kamban makes Sita recall an incident:

And when I had a parrot fair I loved,
I asked my lord what name he liked to give
To her. And he with tenderness replied,
'Give her my virtuous mother Kaikēyi's name'.¹³³

Similarly Rama's love for his brothers is always deep and pure. Lakshmana who follows Rama to the forests has won his love so much that Rama laments over Lakshmana's apparent death due to the force of Indrajit's divine weapon, the 'Brahmastra'. Rama's grief knows no bounds. The poet narrates his grief at length thus:

Now he would plough the ground with his limbs; now he would heave heavy sighs; now he would swoon away as in death; soon coming to himself he could act as one who knew not what he was doing; suddenly he would cry aloud, 'Lakshmana, O Lakshmana!' Then he would place his hands under Lakshmana's nostrils, and call out, 'Livest thou, my child?'¹³⁴

How deep and steadfast is Rama's love for Bharata, we have seen earlier. Even when Lakshmana and Guha suspect as to Bharata's genuine motive in visiting Rama in the forest, Rama has no doubts about Bharata's devotion to him. Rama's love for his brothers and parents thus knows no bounds. Such affectionate disposition of Rama is not limited to his family members alone. He loves his *gurus*; he loves his people even as a prince. The jubilation that the people of Ayodhya feel at the news of Rama's coronation and the intense sorrow they feel at the subsequent news of his exile bear witness to their deep affection for Rama. The sage Vasishta praises Rama's love for the people of his country as universal affection.

'Tis little if I say he loved all men
Ev'n as he loves himself: the love he bears
To thee, ev'n that's the measure of his love
To all things living.¹³⁵

Rama's charity transcends the bounds of his country as he moves away from Ayodhya. He becomes friends with great sages like Agasthya and helps them perform their pujas and sacrifices without any disturbances from the Rakshasas. He becomes friends with the hunter Guha. It is a peculiar friendship. Kamban's portrayal of Guha as befriending Rama and of his absolute love for Rama is one of the superb pieces of poetry in Tamil literature. If Vibhishna represents the sentiment of devotion (*Bhakti*) to Rama as a sophisticated devotee, Guha's love for Rama partakes of *dasa marga*, the kind of devotion of a servant to his master. Rama's love for this unsophisticated hunter transcends the limits of common friendship. Rama includes Guha as one of his brothers. While recalling Rama's unstinted kindness shown to Guha, Sita remembers the unforgettable scene of such friendship:

To the poor hunter who had rowed us across the deep Ganga, he [Rama] spoke words of eternal friendship: "My brother is brother unto thee; thou art my comrade; this lady is your sister-in-law."¹³⁶

This is not all. As Rama travels further south, he meets Sugriva and makes friends with him. Rama is so attracted with this king of the *vanaras*, that he is also included in the brotherhood of Rama. So far Rama is moving among the friendly countries. When he enters Lanka Rama is on the enemy's land. But even here his natural affectionate disposition wins a brother in Vibhishna, a younger brother of Ravana. Kumbhakarna who does not join Rama is also a lover of Rama for his virtuous life and ideals. It is not through the necessity of expediency that Rama makes friends with so many leaders and warriors on his way and in Lanka — *it is not so in Kambarāmāyanam*. It is the spontaneous love on either side that kindles and nourishes the friendship. Even with Ravana, Rama wants to be friends. That is why he sends an ambassador to Ravana. But the latter does not relent. Rama does not want to kill Kumbhakarna, and invites him to his brotherhood through Vibhishna. But Kumbhakarna's brotherly love for Ravana is so steadfast that he refuses to desert Ravana knowing full well that he is on the losing side. He sacrifices his life for his brother's sake, and hence Rama's reluctant slaying of such a selfless warrior. The Universal Brotherhood thus established by Rama

crossing the barriers of clan and clime is an expression of Rama's charity towards human beings at large.

To forgive one's enemy or those who have done some insult or injury or even some treacherous acts of enmity is also an important aspect of charity. Milton portrays Adam as forgiving Eve (PL X, 914-65), and God as not only forgiving Man but finding a redeemer for him in the Son. This is at the spiritual level. At the moral level, Kamban portrays the generosity of Rama and his brothers in forgiving their offenders. Rama and Lakshmana forgive Sugriva for his slackness in keeping his promise. Bharata forgives Mandhara the hunchback and the authoress of Rama's exile and thus the cause of his whole sorrow.

Rama shows his sense of charity at the moral level when he, on the first day of war, allows Ravana to go back from the battlefield alive. The war being a proclaimed one after several ambassadorial efforts to avert war and needless killing, Rama has every right to kill his enemy at the first chance. But he would not do so. Rama's words to Ravana at this juncture reveal his sense of charity:

Thou hadst

This very day been dead, *did not I stay*
My arm for pity's sake, because thou stand'st
Helpless, alone, upon the field.

(italics for emphasis)

Even on the last day when Ravana's chariot retreats as he falls unconscious Rama does not seize the opportunity to kill him. He rather allows Ravana's chariot to retreat, and waits till Ravana regains his consciousness and resumes fighting. This is an act of unrivalled kindness to spare the enemy his life in the battlefield because he is weaponless, and without any protective equipments (see p. 153 above). His magnanimity becomes more evident and greater if we recall how Achilles and even Aeneas strike off the heads of their enemies even as they are pleading for mercy.

Rama's greatest act of charity consists in his request to Dasaratha who has come down from his heavenly abode to bless Rama and Sita. When Dasaratha asks Rama to name a boon that he

desires from him, Rama loses no time. He prays to his father:

Kaikēyi and Bharata, whom you disowned as an evil one and her son respectively, be redeemed as my mother and brother.

When Kamban says that at this request of Rama the whole world— all beings — is all praise for Rama's magnanimous gesture towards his step-mother, he is at his grandest, as his hero, Rama at the height of his glory, but still a man is at the pinnacle of the temple of charity. Kannaki in *Cilappatikāram* forgives the Pandiya king who executed her husband, only after becoming a deity. Jesus Christ as a man is the highest example of such unbounded love for his fellow-men. Both the cultures thus show how man can transform enmity into affection, and the 'wilderness' into a garden of eternal happiness through the alchemy of charity.

SEVEN

CONCLUSION

From our discussion of the treatment of the heroic in terms of Martial, Intellectual and Moral and Spiritual heroism in the epics of Milton and Kamban certain conclusions emerge.

Deviation from their traditions

In his presentation of the aspects of martial heroism such as physical prowess, pride, passions, etc., Milton follows his tradition beginning with Homeric epics. By representing military heroism on a grand scale and its associate aspects like pride, disobedience, passions, self-love, etc., in heroic proportions, Kamban deviates from his earliest Tamil tradition, if not from the pan-Indian, the source of his epic plot. A note of reservation is needed here. Kamban's deviation is qualitative and clear-cut with reference to the earliest epic tradition of the Tamils, while it is quantitative and marginal in respect of his immediate tradition viz., *Jeevakacin-thāmani*.

Milton's critique of earlier tradition

Even though Milton has presented in his epics the conventional heroic code, his adherence to the tradition is not one of

approval but critical. In other words, he presents the heroic formula of his tradition not in an appreciative light, but in critically evaluating shades. Thus his epics emerge as critiques of the western epic tradition. A word of qualification becomes here necessary. That is, Milton is not the first epic poet who attempts such critical revaluation of his tradition while composing his work of art. As we have briefly noted earlier, theory of evolution and especially the theory of amelioration has been at work with every generation of new-comers. Accordingly Virgil reevaluates the Homeric epics when he applies the Achillean pattern of heroism to Turnus, the counter-hero of the *Aeneid* and Tasso reevaluates taking his cue from Virgil, the Odyssean pattern of behaviour as applied to the infidel heroes of his epic. Thus Milton is not alone in his 'heroic' experiment, but with him the experimental revaluation is complete and comprehensive.

Though Kamban has deviated from his ancient epic tradition by portraying aspects of martial heroism on a vast design, he follows his tradition by depicting such heroism in an unfavourable light—a technique of construction for destruction type.

Renovation and Innovation

When we say that Milton completes a long-drawn process of renovation of the heroic code of his tradition, we do not mean the renovation merely in terms of the theme but also in terms of the technique. In explanation, this means that while the medieval epics were struggling to find a proper technique of expressing their renovative themes of moral virtues within the framework of the traditional martial code, and while some of them had a helping hand from the classical moralists in the mode of allegory, it is Milton — as far as the major epic poets are concerned — who boldly evolves a formula whereby the innovated frame of ethical structure and the renovated pattern of heroic code come into a happy blend. In short, Milton finds — after long choosing — an epic formula where the narrative structure accommodates artistically the ethical structure, a pattern of ideas fused with a pattern of incidents, without resorting to the mode of allegory. Milton achieves this happy blend of theme and structure still close to the

classical tradition by creating a heroic 'image' along with a heroic 'person'.

Regarding Kamban there is no such innovation required since the plot of his story has come to him in as consummate a form as possible. Kamban has yet his own renovations to make in keeping with his cultural milieu and in tune with his concept of the *best Man* or to borrow from Milton without being blasphemous, the *greater Man*. As we may not be wrong to say that the *Bible* is not *Paradise Lost*, we may not also be wrong to say that Valmiki's epic is not *Kambarāmāyanam*.

Fusion of the ethical structure with the narrative structure

It is in such an artistic fusion of the ethical structure with the narrative structure that Milton's revaluation of the traditional concept of heroism consists. In such an effort he rejects the formulas of martial and intellectual heroism as a pattern of emulation, but portrays them in his narrative structure as a pattern for rejection. Ethically applied, the traditional epic ethos of martial and intellectual heroism are portrayed as applied to the Devil and his party who constitute the 'heroic person', in contradistinction to the 'heroic image' applied to the 'good' characters of the epic.

Kamban's epic does not show such a restructurization of epic ethos since its original had already been designed in terms of ethical combat and also since there was no need felt for revaluation of the epic ethos in the Indian tradition, at least until Kamban came to compose his epic.

Fortezza, the false heroic — rejected

Although Milton claims to reject the heroic fortitude as its subject matter, it is not the only formula that is rejected in the course of the epic action in his epics. He also rejects specious prudence or vain wisdom as epic ethos.

Accordingly Milton portrays Satan and his followers as warrior heroes choosing to get over their predicaments through the use of their physical strength. Conversely speaking, they are shown as neglecting with regard to themselves and ridiculing in

regard to others the values of moral and spiritual behaviour. Milton's Satan is portrayed simply as the toughest physical giant with an army of soldiers equal in strength and number to almost all the warriors put together which the earth had occasion to meet or visualize. Drawing such a colossal figure of martial prowess and placing him in the role of a counter-hero, Milton shows the end of such heroic career in its fight against God in Heaven as utter defeat and humiliating degradation. Once down deep in Hell, Satan discards his previous code of battle prowess — so the Devil himself rejects the traditional code of martial valour — and resorts to specious prudence to seduce Man in Eden. That is, in Eden, Satan does not employ his physical fortitude for the seduction of Man. He employs the abilities of his mind through his cunning stratagems, wily tricks and false rhetoric. Initially he achieves some success in the sense he is able to seduce Man through Eve; but as far as his prospects are concerned his prudence has only resulted in his irrevocable and irredeemable humiliation of becoming a hissing serpent — a fall from the hugest giant to a vilest creature. This is the sharpest critique of the false heroic — in terms of martial and intellectual strength.

Kamban's more realistic vision

Whereas Milton's innovation of the epic tradition has ousted physical fortitude entirely from the exemplary heroic code, Kamban's renovation of his tradition does not outright reject the battle prowess from its heroic code. It takes a position whereby physical force deviated from and opposed to the path of virtue is to be derided and rejected. Conversely, Kamban shows with the example of Rama that when employed in the service of virtue one's physical valour is shown acceptable and even admirable. Ravana's formidable physical strength and his several boons of invincibility in war have become useless before Rama. In physical proportions Ravana and Rama seem to suggest Gulliver and a Lilliputan respectively. But having opposed *Aram* or *Dharma* represented by the virtuous people like Rama and Sita, Ravana has to fall.

Both the epics concur in their portrayal of inordinate passions — like lust represented by Ravana, ambition for power and glory cherished by Satan — as bringing about ruin to those who are

slaves to them. Both Milton and Kamban demonstrate through their immortal creations that uxoriousness in man leads only to his subjection while self-love alienates one from his kith and kin, not to speak of his own alienation from his society.

Similarly, both the epics demonstrate that powers of the intellect — Knowledge — should be utilized for bettering one's 'being'. Such powers, when employed in the form of dishonesty, disguise, and false rhetoric to overcome one's problems in neglect of the moral and spiritual implications involved therein, become baneful and bring only ruin to those who employ them for sinful purposes. Satan, Comus, Dalila, Ravana, Surpanaka and Mandhara — all these characters put their intellectual powers to sinful use and hence are shown as defeated in the end.

Whether the strength of the body or mind, it is good if put to virtuous use; it is evil if employed to serve vicious end and needs correction or destruction as the case may be. The differences in the clime, country and the culture between Milton and Kamban do not seem to blind them to the common human perception of the good and the evil in terms of their conception of the better heroic ideal.

Loftier heroism — upheld

Having thus rejected the patterns of martial and intellectual heroism, both Milton and Kamban portray the nobler type of heroism in their epics. Milton shows how God has to resort to physical weapons like 'thunder' to expel Satan. Kamban's Rama uses his bow and arrow solely to control or destroy forces of evil. This shows how physical prowess is made use of for establishing and preserving *Dharma* or the Order. Similarly Abdiel, the Son, Rama and Vibhishna show their true wisdom in choosing the righteous path of action and, their sense of humility, obedience and faith by obeying the system or scheme of things that govern their respective life-situations. The virtues of patience and repentance are upheld as saving traits in these epics. Both the poets emphasize the need for conjugal fidelity for both the partners, the husband and his wife. Above all, both Milton and Kamban present a glorious portrait of the virtue of charity: to Milton 'charity is

the soul of all the rest' (*PL* XII, 584-585); for Kamban it is the most promising and unfailing virtue that fosters Universal Brotherhood, bringing various kinds of human beings under the benign light of Universal Love. Both the epic poets representing the cultures of the West and the East thus concur in their vision of Life that Love (evolving from *eros* to *agape*) rather than *fortezza* (strength of the body and the intellect) and Love alone can bring meaningful union of and righteous happiness for the human race at large.

Are they not — Kamban of the ninth century Tamilnad and Milton of the seventeenth century England — *are they not still relevant* to this world of ours today when man is threatened with total annihilation at any hour by the fruits of his own intellect in the form of racial and regional enmity and coldwar on the one hand, and in the form of inescapable devilish armsrace on the other? *Is not Kamban's message of universal brotherhood more relevant, more urgent today?*

NOTES

ABOUT THE NOTES

The format of reference NOTES is so simplified as to avoid repetitive mention of works, quoted and cited. Consequently, there are only two items in a NOTE — author's name/surname and pagination. An author's name represents a work or an article by him, and the number that follows refers to the page/s of the work or the article as the case may be. All other bibliographical data are given in the Bibliography which immediately follows the NOTES. For example, NOTE 77 of chapter SIX reads:

BRODWIN 63

whereby reference is made to page 63 of the article, "Milton and the Renaissance Circe" by Leonora Leet Browdin included in *Milton Studies* Vol. IV edited by J.D. Simmonds. In case where more than one work or article of the same author are cited, the order of works as entered in the Bibliography is indicated by a superior figure just above the author's name. For example, NOTE 60 of chapter six reads :

FRYE² 24

which means reference is made to page 24 in *Five Essays on Milton's Epics* which is entered in the Bibliography as Northrop Frye's 2nd work.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Rama Sarma¹ 3
2. Bush¹ 19
3. Appasamy 13
4. *Oxford Universal Dictionary* 1078
5. *ibid* 1250
6. *ibid* 28
7. Webster's III *New International Dictionary* iii 2526
8. *Oxford Universal Dictionary* 1934
9. *Advanced Learner's Dictionary* 225
10. *Concise Oxford Dictionary* 264
11. *Oxford Universal Dictionary* 2145
12. *Concise Oxford Dictionary* 296
13. *Oxford Universal Dictionary* 567
14. *ibid* 1824
15. *Tirukkural* 978
16. Thomas ā Kempis 27
17. *ibid* 28
18. Anderson 14
19. Joseph Addison in Bradley et al 622
20. M.K. Gandhi, *ibid* 157
21. *Faerie Queene* Bks IV and V ; for a modern short story based on this theme see *Kumudam* (7.2.1980) 31
22. Mudaliyar 175
23. *Twentieth Century Chamber's Dictionary* 219
24. *PuṛaṇāṅṁTu* 192 Trans. T.P. Meenakshisundaran⁵ vi
25. Thomas ā Kempis 32

CHAPTER TWO

THE EPIC TRADITION INHERITED BY MILTON

1. Beye 147
2. Davenport¹ 77
3. Tillyard² 73
4. Davenport¹ 57
5. *ibid* 102
6. Frye¹ 319
7. Routh I 103-104
8. Bowra² 318-319
9. Davenport¹ 68
10. *ibid*
11. Levy 221
12. Routh I 207
13. Tillyard² 85
14. Anderson 9, 63
15. Bowra¹ 84
16. Taylor, as quoted in Tillyard² 148
17. Tillyard² 120
18. *ibid* 238
19. Hornstein et al 70
20. Bowra¹ 137
21. Translated by Fairfax quoted in Bowra¹ 144. All quotations from *Jerusalem Delivered* are from Fairfax's translations as quoted in Bowra¹.
22. Bowra² 107
23. Steadman¹ 17, note 1
24. Spenser 45
25. Steadman¹ 163
26. Routh I 34, 93
27. Levy 89 ; Anderson 20
28. Bowra¹ 48

29. *The Aeneid* VI 851-853 trans. Beye 227
30. Hornstein et al 128
31. Singleton 109
32. Bowra¹ 159
33. *ibid* 160
34. Bayley 124
35. *The Iliad* I 274 trans. Beye 122
36. Davenport² 85
37. *The Aeneid* IV 171-172 trans. Bowra¹ 50
38. Pöschl 176
39. See note 31 above
40. Pöschl 177
41. Steadman¹ 131
42. Davenport¹ 102
43. "Ulysses" in Steiner and Fagles 139
44. Beye 196
45. Anderson 44
46. *The Aeneid* IV 449 trans. Bowra¹ 58
47. Eliot² 166
48. *Saggi Critici* (VII 240-256) *trans. and quoted in Poggioni 72
49. Poggioni 74
50. Bowra¹ 94
51. *Os Lusíadas* X, 46, 5-8 trans. Fanshawe quoted in Bowra¹ 94
52. Bowra¹ 183
53. Whitman 43
54. Routh I 113
55. Bowra¹ 68
56. Pöschl 168
57. Bayley 110
58. Tillyard² 37
59. See note 55 above
60. *The Aeneid* XII 945 ff trans. and quoted in Anderson 98-99
61. Davenport¹ 95, 98; also see Bowra³ 114
62. Steadman¹ 139
63. Routh I 33
64. Stanford 1 37
65. Trans. and quoted in Bowra¹ 56
66. Beye 165; Davenport² 26
67. Davenport² 42
68. Beye 191-192
69. Bowra¹ 173
70. Davenport¹ 52
71. Levy 90
72. *The Odyssey* VI, 225ff trans. Butler 63
73. Routh I 110
74. Bowra¹ 43, 135-136
75. Eliot¹ 38
76. Bowra¹ 112-113
77. *Os Lusíadas* II, 12, 8 in Bowra¹ 112
78. Stanford 128
79. Anderson 77
80. Freccero¹ 110-111
81. Bloomfield 42, 44
82. Bowra¹ 162
83. Routh I 219-220
84. Bowra¹ 63; also cp *Tirukkural* 429
85. Trans. Bowra¹ 63
86. Hornstein et al 128
87. Routh II 262-263
88. Maurice Evans 115-117
89. Hornstein et al 227
90. Davenport¹ 86
91. Haecker 74
92. Steadman¹ 130; Bayley 111
93. Bowra¹ 69
94. Singleton 109
95. Bowra¹ 155-156
96. trans. Bowra¹ 83
97. Eliot¹ 38
98. Bowra¹ 134
99. *Jerusalem Delivered* I, 8, 7 quoted in Bowra¹ 155
100. Maurice Evans 89
101. Germain 92-93
102. Stanford 135
103. Beye 222
104. Steadman¹ 185
105. Maurice Evans 32
106. Hornstein et al 10
107. *The Aeneid*, Prologue 3-5 trans. Anderson 12
108. *Purgatory* XXVI last verse trans. Eliot¹ 34

109. *Os Lusiadas* I, 106, 1-4 in Bowra¹ 100
110. *Jerusalem Delivered* trans. Fairfax quoted in Steadman¹ 162 note 3
111. Tillyard² 27
112. Davenport¹ 33
113. Davenport² 78
114. *ibid* 80
115. *The Odyssey* XVIII 200ff trans. Butler 196
116. Poggioli 74
117. Maurice Evans 181
118. Bayley 130; see also INTRODUCTION note 21
119. Davenport¹ 98
120. Beye 128
121. The adjective and noun forms of this Roman word, "describe the right relationship that exists between a human being and (1) the gods, (2) his public responsibilities as a citizen or a political leader, (3) his family, and (4) other human beings." Anderson 21
122. Trans. Bowra¹ 64
123. For details of this controversy see Anderson 98-100, 108-109. Compare a similar critical controversy over Rama's slaying of Vāli. In both the cases, it seems, the claims of *eros* and *agape* are at variance.
124. Tillyard² 249
125. *Os Lusiadas* I, 12, 7-8 Bowra¹ 97
126. *Os Lusiadas* VII trans. and quoted by Tillyard² 249.
127. Bowra¹ 160
128. Maurice Evans 184
129. Bayley 151-152
130. Routh I 130-174

CHAPTER THREE

TAMIL EPIC TRADITION
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1. Venkatasami Nattar 524-525
2. Dikshitar 335-336
3. *ibid* 381
4. Kandasamy 43, 53
5. Translations of the verses from *JC* wherever quoted are by this author.
6. Dikshitar 256
7. *ibid* 259 note 5
8. *ibid* 102-103
9. Chidambaranathan Chettiar 56-59
10. Meenakshisundaran² 88, 90
11. Varadarajan¹ 143; Gurusami²⁸
12. Translations of passages from *MM* wherever quoted are by this author.
13. Gnanamurthy¹ 54-55
14. Danielou 127-128
15. Burton, cited in *Oxford Universal Dictionary* 70
16. Subramanyam 125
17. Book III, 190
18. Compare Jeevaka's slaying of his enemies with Odysseus' slaying of the suitors through tricks and strategy. See the *Odyssey* XXII.
19. Paramasivanandam 128
20. Varadarajan² 98
21. *Cil* 27: 103-108; 29: 60-62. *MM* 2: 55-57.
22. *Tirukkuraḷ* 235, Parimēl-aḷakar commentary

23. Meenakshisundaran⁴ 25
24. *ibid* 24
25. See Dr. Swaminathaiyar's note on *MM* 21:57 for an explanation of the five virtues.
26. Meenakshisundaran³ 93
27. Duraisami Pillai 64
28. Meenakshisundaran³ 43
29. Natesa Nayakar 129
30. Danielou 143
31. *JC* 1372-1373; *KR* V,3: 11
32. Dikshitar 317
33. *ibid* 387
34. Margabandhu Sarma³ 126; Gurusami 34 takes this statement by Kannaki as an example of the poet's artistry to ensure poetic justice.
35. Margabandhu Sarma¹ 76
36. *Bhāgavatamuktaphalatikā* 297-298 cited by Raghavan 179
37. *Puṭanābhūtu* 204: 1-4
38. Gnanamurthy² 129
39. See Chapter II of this study under *Pride* (pp. 15-17) and *Anger* (pp. 22-23)
40. Gnanamurthy² 142
41. Varadarajan³ 54
42. Branca 279
43. Meenakshisundaran¹ 91
Margabandhu Sarma² 66
44. *Cil* 10: 168-169
45. Raghavan 84
46. *KR* the exordium 5,6 and 10
47. Raghavaiyengar 16-51

CHAPTER FOUR

MARTIAL HEROISM IN THE EPICS OF MILTON AND KAMBAN

1. Rama Sarma¹ 78
2. Steadman² 149-150
3. West 1028
4. Steadman³ 157
5. Steadman¹ 23
6. Fowler note on *PL* I 144
7. Summers¹ 46
8. *ibid* 52
9. Daiches 173
10. Steadman¹ 26
11. See Wilding 91-120
12. *KR* III, 3: 14-16 trans.
Aiyar 233
13. *KR* III, 7: 7, 8, 9, 14, 15,
17, 18. See Ramakrishnan 92
14. *KR* VI, 14: 183 trans.
Aiyar 240
15. *KR* VI, 14: 186 trans.
Aiyar 241
16. *KR* VI, 36: 150 trans.
Aiyar 251
17. *KR* VI, 36:135 trans. Aiyar
250
18. *KR* VI, 36: 176-177 trans.
Aiyar 251-252
19. Basham 475-476
20. Swanton 9
21. *KR* VI, 36: 199 trans.
Aiyar 253
22. Bowra² 128
23. Gnanasambandan 84
24. Campbell 293
25. *KR* VI, 14: 249 trans.
Appuswami 172
26. *KR* VI, 14: 251 trans.
Appuswami 173
27. Lewis 66
28. Arnold Williams 147
29. Campbell 284
30. Coleridge 95
31. *KR* VI, 5: 15-59
32. *KR* IV, 3: 61-67

33. KR VI, 2: 77-80
34. *ibid* 101, 109 trans. Aiyar 119-120
35. *ibid* VI, 25:12
36. *ibid* VI, 27:6 trans. Aiyar 111
37. *ibid* VI, 27:7, 8 trans. Aiyar 111
38. Gnanasambandan 51
39. Pandurangan 225
40. KR IV, 7: 139-140
41. *ibid* 159
42. George¹ 138
43. For a hierarchy of sins see Alastair Fowler's editorial note on PL IX, 1003-1004.
44. Lewis 73-74
45. *ibid* 76
46. *ibid* 78
47. MacCaffrey 168-169
48. Ramakrishnan 91-92
49. Miner 257
50. Hill 368
51. PL V, 520-542; VII, 895-912; VIII, 633-643
52. PL IV, 866-873
53. Revard 75
54. Burden 141
55. J.M. Evans 80
56. KR III, 9: 5-11
57. Blessington 62
58. Tillyard¹ 164
59. Le Comte 110
60. Steadman² 170
61. Burden 170
62. Rajan³ 7
63. Burden 167
64. Rama Sarma¹ 100
65. Trans. and quoted in Blessington 62-63
66. For several other literary sources of this tradition see Fowler's note on PL IX, 782-784.
67. Trans. Aiyar 222. He has referred to this aspect of comparison with Milton as early as 1940s.
68. *Cil* 17: 11-16, trans. Dikshitar 263-264
69. Posnett 325
- 69-A. First appeared in ELH, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Sept. 1937), rpt. in *Critical Essays on Milton from ELH*, 163-181.
70. George¹ 87
71. See Fowler's note on PL XII 469-478
72. KR II, 2: 86
73. KR II, 12: 66
74. KR VI, 4: 143
75. Rajan² xxv
76. See Carey's note on PR II, 151
77. Gardner 87
78. Miner 237
79. KR IV, 7: 109-110 trans. Aiyar 167
80. KR III, 7: 85
81. KR VI, 2: 48-56; 2: 73-99
82. KR VI, 28: 35, 39 trans. Aiyar 232
83. Meenakshisundaran¹ 90
84. See *Tirukkuta!* chapter 15
85. Ramakrishnan 99
86. KR VI, 36: 99 trans. Appu-swami 184
87. Aiyar 253
88. Leyerle 63
89. *ibid* 66
90. Blessington 10
91. Manickam 128-129
92. Daiches 173
93. Rama Sarma¹ 84-85
94. Broadbent 80
95. Frye² 66
96. Burden 90-91
97. J.M. Evans 287
98. Frye¹ 72
99. Hawkins 64
100. Lewis 38; see chapter TWO p. 20
101. Steadman³ 37
102. *ibid* 65
103. Rama Sarma² 5
104. KR III 8: 62
105. *ibid* 67,70

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| 106. <i>ibid</i> 55/3-4; 61/1; 62/1;
67/1-2 | 113. <i>PL</i> V 860-864 |
| 107. <i>KR</i> III, 8: 78, 81; 10: 63, 69 | 114. Mahood 238 |
| 108. <i>KR</i> III, 10: 124 | 115. Potter 74 |
| 109. See chapter THREE, p. 57 | 116. Coleridge 95 |
| 110. Le Comte 69 | 117. <i>KR</i> V, 2: 23 |
| 111. Hill 367 | 118. Ramakrishnan 93 |
| 112. Rama Sarma ¹ 83 | 119. Charles Williams ² 30 |
| | 120. Gardner 90 |
| | 121. Samuel ¹ 28 |

CHAPTER FIVE

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| 1. Steadman ¹ 72 | 26. Wilding 104-105 |
| 2. <i>ibid</i> 45 | 27. <i>KR</i> III, 5: 41 |
| 3. Mahood 242 | 28. <i>KR</i> III, 5: 43 |
| 4. Teilhard 274 | 29. <i>ibid</i> 7: 66 |
| 5. Mahood 261 | 30. <i>KR</i> III, 7: 81 |
| 6. Steadman ¹ 72 | 31. <i>ibid</i> 5: 90 |
| 7. Rajan ² 83 note on 557-561 | 32. <i>PL</i> IX, 857-858 |
| 8. <i>KR</i> V, 13: 47; Gopala-
krishnamachariar's edition
with commentary 785 | 33. Rajan ³ 154 |
| 9. <i>KR</i> V, 13: 48; Gopala-
krishnamachariar 786 | 34. Broadbent 106 |
| 10. <i>KR</i> V, 13: 50, 51; Gopala-
krishnamachariar 787-788 | 35. II Corinthians 13, 14 |
| 11. Pandurangan 237, note 70 | 36. <i>PL</i> I, 423-431 |
| 12. <i>KR</i> VI, 27: 9, 10 trans. this
author | 37. Frye ² 80 |
| 13. <i>KR</i> VI, 36: 224 | 38. Steadman ¹ 48 |
| 14. See page 27 above | 39. <i>KR</i> III, 9: 20-22 |
| 15. Lodi 35-47 | 40. <i>ibid</i> 9: 25 |
| 16. Fowler note on <i>PL</i> V, 685-
693 | 41. <i>KR</i> IV, 2: 30, 31; V, 2: 42,
100; VI, 37: 252 |
| 17. Fowler note on <i>PL</i> I, 105 | 42. <i>KR</i> III, 7: 153 trans. this
author |
| 18. Charles Williams ¹ 23-24 | 43. <i>KR</i> III, 9: 72, 73 |
| 19. Blessington 1 | 44. <i>KR</i> VI, 16: 61-63 |
| 20. Act I, scene i | 45. <i>ibid</i> 22: 3 |
| 21. Miner 486 | 46. <i>ibid</i> 25: 36-41 |
| 22. <i>PL</i> IV, 121-125 | 47. <i>ibid</i> 25: 93 |
| 23. Lewis 97 | 48. Daiches 158 |
| 24. Miner 483 | 49. MacCaffrey 70 |
| 25. Fowler note on <i>PL</i> IX, 830-
833 | 50. <i>ibid</i> 71 |
| | 51. <i>PL</i> IV, 440-443; 635-638 |
| | 52. Kermode ² 106 |
| | 53. Fowler note on <i>PL</i> IX,
698-699 |

54. Broadbent 150-151
 55. Lewis 69
 56. Satan : *PL* I, 630-633; II, 445-456, 815-844; V, 772-802, 857-871; IX, 679-732; *PR* III, 109-120
 Adam: *PL* IX, 921-951
 Eve: *PL* IX, 327-341, 745-779
 Comus: 665-689, 719-728, 736-754
 Dalila: 766-818, 843-870
 907-927, 951, 960-996
 57. Patterson et al XII, 159-163
 58. *KR* II, 2: 54-56 trans. Aiyar 257
 59. *ibid* 258
 60. *KR* II, 2: 79 trans. Aiyar 259
 61. *KR* II, 2: 82-84 trans. Aiyar 260
 62. Manickam 78-79

CHAPTER SIX

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL HEROISM IN THE
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1. Steadman¹ xix
2. Miner 481
3. Fish 166-167
4. *ibid* 168
5. *ibid* 179-180
6. *ibid* 180
7. Blessington 69
8. *KR* III, 3: 55; 6: 178
9. *KR* I, 11: 28 trans. Aiyar 59
10. *KR* VI, 36: 134 trans. Aiyar 250
11. *KR* IV, 7: 110 trans. Aiyar 63
12. *ibid* 10: 4 trans. Aiyar 60
13. *KR* VI, 14: 251 trans. Aiyar 60
14. *ibid* 35: 2, *ibid* 245
15. *ibid* 15:17, *ibid* 19
16. *ibid* 27: 4, *ibid* 111
17. *ibid*
18. *KR* VI, 36: 196 trans. Aiyar 23
19. *KR* VI, 27: 5
20. *KR* VI, 14: 251, 255 trans. Aiyar 60
21. *ibid* 36: 173 trans. Aiyar 251
22. Aiyar 246
23. Hill 425
24. *ibid*
25. Barker 29
26. Steadman¹ 76
27. Samuel³ 120, note 9
28. Steadman¹ 43
29. Ramakrishnan 148
30. Gardner 67
31. It is the Eve in Adam that leads him to aspire for heavenly knowledge. See Russell 193-194
32. *KR* VI, 2:75, 79, 80, 81
33. *KR* VI, 4:143
34. Ramakrishnan 148
35. Rajan³ 78
36. Emerson 366
37. Singleton 109 - 110
38. Mahood 236
39. Fowler note on *PL* III, 267 - 269
40. *ibid*
41. Rajan⁵ 107
42. Steadman¹ xvi
43. Radzinowicz¹ 171
44. Rama Sarma² 33
45. Tulsi Ram 177
46. George² 78
47. Ramakrishnan 70
48. *ibid* 83; See also *KR II* 13: 117
49. *KR* II, 3: 114 trans. Aiyar 9
50. Aiyar 9
51. *KR* II, 3: 107-114
52. *KR* II, 13: 124
53. *ibid* 13: 126, 128
54. *ibid* 10: 58
55. *ibid* 13: 135, 136
56. Gardner 97-98

57. Gransden 121
58. Radzinowicz¹ 179
59. Rama Sarma² 33-35
60. Frye² 24
61. Fish 190
62. *ibid* 193
63. Hill 424
64. *KR* II, 4: 129 trans. Aiyar 46
65. *ibid* 13: 44, 47 trans. Aiyar 50
66. *KR* IV, 7: 43 trans. Aiyar 50
67. *KR* VI, 4: 108, 117
68. Bush¹ 167
69. Summers² 42
70. Rajan³ 7
71. *ibid* 8
72. *KR* III, 7: 153
73. Rama Sarma¹ 36
74. Mahood 242
75. J.M. Evans 103
76. Hill 414
77. Brodwin 63
78. *ibid* 64
79. *KR* III, 5: 40, 44, 49
80. Rajan³ 36
81. Carey note on *PR* I, 355
82. Brodwin 66
83. Lewalski 203-204
84. *KR* II, 12: 35
85. Frye² 148
86. See Carey's note on *PR* IV, 560-561 for various views expressed. In addition, see Frye² 148-151, and Barker 25-26
87. Frye² 149
88. *ibid*
89. Barker 26
90. Frye² 151
91. Bush² note on *SA* 1168 ff
92. Rama Sarma² 27
93. Blessington 51
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96. Radzinowicz² 50
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98. *ibid* 280
99. *ibid* 281
100. Rama Sarma² 49
101. Rajan⁵ 86
102. Gardner 88
103. Daiches 158
104. *KR* III, 8: 78 trans. Aiyar 51
105. Nicolson 85
106. Woodhouse 52
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108. Woodhouse 56
109. Rama Sarma¹ 27-28
110. Emerson 365
111. Bush¹ 135
112. Rama Sarma¹ 26
113. Oldfield 108
114. *KR* I, 1: 1
115. Meenakshisundaran¹ 94; Manickam 65
116. Mudaliyar 175
117. *KR* II, 4: 222 trans. Aiyar 10-11
118. Aiyar 16
119. *KR* V, 3: 15
120. Aiyar 17
121. Ramakrishnan 144
122. *KR* VI, 16: 22, 23 trans. Aiyar 21
123. Vaiyapuri Pillai 140
124. *KR* III, 9: 72; V, 5:24
125. *KR* V, 5: 34 trans. Aiyar 307-308
126. George¹ 6-7
127. Blessington 37-38, 49
128. Summers² 41
129. Dunne 55-56
130. Rajan¹ 46
131. Salamatullah Khan 112
132. Blessington 72
133. *KR* V, 5:78 trans. Aiyar 47
134. *KR* VI, 18:222 trans. Aiyar 47
135. *KR* II, 1: 37 trans. Aiyar 48
136. *KR* V, 3: 23 trans. Rama-krishnan 86

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APPENDIX

Outlines of the Epics

ABOUT THE OUTLINES

The following are the thematic outlines of the epic poems discussed above. In so far as the background epics constituting the European and the Tamil traditions are concerned, the outlines are significant in terms of the points of comparison made in the discussion rather than in those of their plot sequence. In regard to the epics of Milton and Kamban, the outlines are plot-oriented and hence more elaborate, their points of comparison being the very concern of this study.

The European tradition

1. The Iliad

The first known Greek epic in 24 Books by Homer (9th c.B.C.); "Wrath of Achilles" is its theme and Achilles its hero. So it celebrates the disastrous effects of Achilles' anger: first provoked by Agamemnon over the issue of sharing the booty of a day's war, namely a Trojan girl, Briseis. Denied this right—an insult to his honour—Achilles withdraws from the war resulting in the humiliation of Greek soldiers at the hands of Hector, the chief warrior on the Trojan side. Agamemnon the overall chief of the Greek army has to give in and accede to the claims of Achilles in view of the latter's martial excellence. Achilles' anger is provoked a second time by Hector's killing of his friend Patroclus. Achilles avenges his friend's death by killing Hector and maltreating his corpse tied to his chariot, by dragging it around the walls of Troy day by day until the old king Priam begs Achilles for his son's body for burial. No one has the courage to oppose and contain Achilles. Thus the heroic issues of the epic are resolved only on the basis of Achilles' battle prowess. Neither powers of intellect such as wisdom, intelligence, reasoning or rhetoric nor moral considerations like justice, compassion, forgiveness and the like are shown to have any claims for heroic approbation. As such, the *Iliad* portrays the contemporary Greek concept of ideal heroism as one of celebrating the martial feats of warrior heroes.

2. The Odyssey

Traditionally ascribed to Homer, the *Odyssey* is the second wellknown Greek epic in 24 Books. Home-coming is its subject matter. It describes the adventures of Odysseus, one of the Greek soldiers of the Trojan war on his ten years' way back after the fall of Troy. Owing to the displeasure of the gods, Odysseus has to face many a hurdle on his voyage home: strange and perilous encounters with the Lotus-Eaters, with cannibals, the Cyclops, whirlpools and clashing rocks, with Aeolus, god of the winds, with the enchantress Circe, the ghosts of the dead, the cattle of the sun-god and with Calypso. Though he left the shores of

Troy ten years ago with hundreds of his followers, he is the only survivor when he becomes the captive of Calypso. He is much inferior in physical stature when compared with Achilles or Hector. He overcomes all these hurdles through sheer intelligence, shrewdness supreme skill in speech and conversation — traits signifying his intellectual powers. His terrible encounter with the one-eyed monster, Polyphemus and his escape from his cave is the most famous of his adventures. This he is able to achieve not because of his physical fortitude but through his craftiness. Again he is able to get the necessary help to reach home from king Alcinous through his silver-tongued oratory which keeps his audience spellbound sitting up all night in rapt attention. Thus in every adventure we can trace his survival to his forethought, his prudence or his ability to think his way out. Hence *Odyssey* is a man of the intellect. In short, we can say that the *Iliad* is a poem about force, while the *Odyssey* is a poem about the triumph of the mind over force.

3. The Aeneid

An epic poem in XII books by Virgil (70-19B.C.) the greatest of Roman poets; it describes the adventures of Aeneas, the hero. Aeneas, the son-in-law of the Trojan king Priam leaves Troy after its fall in search of a more abiding city. Book I describes the great storm which brings Aeneas and his followers to the coast of Carthage ruled by Dido the queen. Aeneas narrates to the queen the fall of Troy and his wanderings from Troy to Sicily in Books II and III. Book IV describes the tragic love of Dido and Aeneas who in submission to the will of Jupiter sails on, leaving the heart-broken queen to kill herself. Books V and VI describe Aeneas' journey into the underworld where he meets his father Anchises among the blessed and receives the great revelation of the future of Rome according to the divine plan. At the end of this Book Aeneas emerges as a renewed soul finding justification for all his sufferings and burdens—he loses his old father and the only son on the way, is forced to desert Dido whom he really loved and, is destined to found a new seat of kingdom in the midst of opposition by the natives. Book VII deals with the arrival of the Trojan fleet on the Italian shores and the Italian peoples' preparation for war. In Book VIII Aeneas

sails up the river Tiber to the future site of Rome. The last four Books are devoted to the wars between the Trojans and the Latins. At the end the natives lose the war with the death of their leader Turnus while Aeneas emerges victorious and marries Lavinia the daughter of the native king.

The mission of Aeneas to found the greatest city of ancient times, Rome, is not essentially based on mere force, or even on reason and wile, but rather on *pietas*, a desire to fulfill one's duty. Though he too travels the seas, like Odysseus and endures many hardships, he ultimately lands in Italy not as an invader or as an avenger, but as a suppliant, petitioning for a vacant site to found the city that he has been commissioned to establish. He does not enter the war for any personal motive as in the *Iliad*, but through a desire to fulfill his mission in life, his destiny for a public cause ordained by the gods themselves. His righteous indignation and fiery valour enable him to defeat the opposing forces, but he does not represent the barbaric energy of the Homeric warriors. This quality has been transferred to Turnus and his forces of opposition. Aeneas accepts war as a necessary evil, an instrument of his ultimate purpose; but in spite of the slaughter of his dearest friend Pallas, he decides the final issue in a personal duel with Turnus, thus avoiding random fighting and needless killing. His ultimate purpose is building, not destroying, the eternal city. It seems clear then, that Virgil rejects the Homeric concept of might and physical prowess as an aspect of the heroic ideal, and presents instead the concept of *pietas* as the ideal of heroism.

4. The Divine Comedy

An Italian Medieval epic by Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) divided into three principal parts viz., Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. Being an epic of a quest of the human soul seeking the highest form of wisdom that leads to heavenly Bliss, the *Divine Comedy* is structured as a journey, a pilgrimage through Hell and Purgatory to the seven circles of Heaven. With Virgil as his guide Dante, the hero descends the realistically portrayed circles of Hell and then he climbs the mount of Purgatory where his guide Virgil, symbol of temporal wisdom, disappears. It is Beatrice, the symbol of Theology who

guides him thereafter through the luminous heavens to the supreme bliss—the contemplation of God.

There is therefore, little scope in the theme itself for the portrayal of the aspects of martial heroism. Dante, however, reveals his attitude towards such heroic expression by assigning to famous warriors such as Achilles and Hector places in Hell. Similarly he places in Hell great rebels whose pride cannot be broken, like Uberti and Capaneus. Beatrice says in canto VII that the sin of Adam and Eve was essentially one of pride and disobedience. Passionate characters are also placed in Hell. The most famous pair of lovers in this epic, Paolo and Francesca, are portrayed as being whirled together in a wintry landscape bound together for ever but unable to gratify their passion. Dante treats anger as an expression of demonic influence over the soul and hence assigns places in Hell to persons who have given vent to their wrath. The deceitful and the fraudulent are placed in the lower circle of Hell while the treacherous at the nethermost. Ulysses is therefore confined to Inferno in view of his use of rhetoric which does not further moral or spiritual interests.

The souls which are penitent, humble and obedient are placed in Purgatory. They are depicted as singing songs of prayer and thereby resisting the temptations of Satan which symbolizes their faith in God. "In His will is our peace" clearly indicates the position of Dante. Similarly those who have consciously willed to disown their selfish passions but are unable to dissociate themselves from them are consigned to Purgatory where they make themselves worthy of heaven and salvation by degrees by developing the love of God. Thus Dante assigns *agape*, the highest form of Christian love, the highest place and records his concept of heroism in terms of moral and spiritual attainments of the souls.

5. Os Lusíadas

A medieval epic in ten cantos by Luis Camoens (1542-1580), the most famous of Portuguese poets; it celebrates the heroic exploits of not one man but of a nation of heroic men and thus it is more national than the *Aeneid* in spirit. The epic theme—"the daring

and the renown of the Portuguese"—is fused with the narrative structure of the voyage (1497-98) past the Cape of Good Hope to India by Vasco Da Gama. The story plunges in medias res with the storm-tossed mariner Vasco Da Gama already past the Cape on his voyage up the east coast of Africa into the unknown to find a new empire. By flashbacks, prophecies, and a final world-view from a high mountain where the hero, da Gama has been taken by his goddess, Venus, the history of Portugal at home and abroad is recorded.

To the poet the adventures are crusades and he tries to probe the deeper meaning of their heroism; the Portuguese discoveries are proofs of God's design that the world should be united in one faith. This conquest of the east means therefore, to Camoens the triumph of the spiritual values of Europe and Christianity. The qualities displayed by the heroic Vasco Da Gama are therefore, of a different order. He is not interested in military action but resorts to war when his purpose meets with opposition. The great battle of Scalado fought by king Affonso the Fourth is shown as successful but brutal and cruel. Thus the epic shows that war and violence are justifiable only when used to achieve a higher goal, a loftier purpose.

Bacchus, the antihero who opposes the mission of da Gama is portrayed as proud and disobedient symbolizing cunning, disorder and deceit. On one occasion Bacchus even disguises himself as a Christian, and raises a Christian altar: "the false God came to adore the true". Thus all the qualities partaking of martial and intellectual heroism are ascribed to the infidels and evil spirits. The epic stresses the quality of patience and endurance. Da Gama's heroism lies therefore in his steadfastness of purpose aided by strength of spirit and patient endurance of every obstacle and hazard, natural and human, during his journey.

6. Jerusalem Delivered

The best known romantic epic of the Renaissance by Torquato Tasso (1544-1595), an Italian poet. It describes the first crusade—a Holy war by "the sacred armies, and the godly knight/that the great sepulchre of Christ did free"—by defeating the efforts of the

devil assisted by a beautiful sorceress Armida to prevent the crusaders from capturing Jerusalem. The heroes, Goffredo, Rinaldo and Tancredi do not depend merely on their physical prowess to achieve their aim. They could succeed only as they turn their thoughts to Heaven. Like Virgil, Tasso invests the enemies of the crusaders with the old heroic qualities of warrior heroism and, by their defeat in the end he depicts them as unheroic.

Rinaldo, one of the crusaders is first depicted as one nourishing heroic pride, sense of martial honour, defiance to Order in his love for Armida and uncontrollable fury in killing a fellow crusader. He is shown as victorious in the end only after he sheds these physical aspects of heroism and is chastened by the father confessor of the crusaders. The devils and the infidels obstruct the task of the crusaders by resorting to their knowledge in the form of necromancy and their insight into the weakness of the crusaders. Armida uses her knowledge and charm to lead Rinaldo astray—a nefarious design. This is counteracted by the sage who uses his powers to help the holy cause. Thus Tasso is the first in the European tradition to discriminate in the use of one's intellectual powers—true wisdom if put to loftier use; vain wisdom if used for nefarious ends. He has also shown in his epic that chivalry and martial glory to be meaningful should be subservient to moral and spiritual ends.

It depicts Solimano as one of the most heroic of men, singularly lacking in guile and deceit, and yet shown as defeated in the end for being an infidel, i.e., for want of zeal and faith in Christianity. Rinaldo's succumbing to the charms of Armida is censured by the sage. Patient endurance of hardships is portrayed in an appreciative light. Goffredo, the hero is an excellent example of patience and endurance as the opening lines of the epic sing: "in that glorious war much suffered he / His soldiers wild, to brawls and mutinies prest/Reduced he to peace." Thus *Jerusalem Delivered* depicts a kind of heroism which is anticlassical in spirit.

7. The Faerie Queene

The best-known British romantic epic by Edmund Spenser (1552—1599); Cast in the framework of Medieval Chivalry, it deals with the quest theme in a pattern of twelve quest adventures of knight errantry each with its own hero allegorically representing one of the twelve virtues. Of this large pattern, Spenser completed only six Books embodying the virtues of Faith, Temperance, Chastity, Justice and Courtesy, while Prince Arthur the hero co-ordinates the twelve separate adventures and unites in himself all the twelve moral virtues which constitute "magnanimity." Of the completed six Books, Book I deals with the adventures of the Red Cross Knight of Holiness (Faith) the protector of the Virgin Una (Truth), and the wiles of Archimago and Duessa. Book II describes the adventures of Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, his encounters with Pyrocles and Chymocles, his visit to the cave of the Mammon and the House of Temperance and his destruction of Acrasia and her Bower of Bliss. Book III is about the legend of Chastity, exemplified by Britomart and Belphoebe ; Book IV deals with the legend of Triamond and Cambell, exemplifying Friendship, together with the story of Scudamour and Amoret ; Book V describes the adventures of Artegall, the Knight of Justice, and Book VI deals with the adventures of Sir Calidore, the Knight of Courtesy.

Spenser's expressed aim of his epic is "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." Accordingly Physical prowess is not given any decisive role in the action of the epic in spite of the fact that the framework of Medieval chivalry does have the battle formula, an epic motif. Orgoglio is depicted as a giant representing enormous physical strength and indomitable pride but vanquished finally by Prince Arthur, the Grace of God. Similarly deceit and disguise are condemned in this epic. Archimago symbolizing hypocrisy and Duessa symbolizing falsehood team up to break up the union of the Red Cross Knight (Faith) and Una (Truth). Through disguise and deceit, these two are able for a time to mislead and misguide the Knight and Una until at last they are exposed and driven out again by Prince Arthur.

Spenser dramatizes not merely the external adventures of the Knights but also allegorizes their interior conflicts. Every one of

the Knights is assailed by temptations of various kinds. The typical example is the temptation of the Red Cross Knight to spiritual Pride and Despair. In every case it is Prince Arthur, the Divine Grace that enables them to overcome the temptations. Spenser creates a Lady as one of his Knights, Britomart representing the virtue of chastity. He does not favour religious celibacy as a trait of chastity nor is he sympathetic towards it as a passive virtue. He condemns promiscuity as seen in the episode of Acrasia or that of Paridel and Hellenore. Britomart represents ideal love, serene, controlled and fructifying. She champions, advances and represents chastity as an active and beneficent principle which justifies her being a Lady Knight. Books IV, V and VI describe the theme of charity at social and spiritual levels. Friendship, Courtesy and Justice are forms of Charity at the social or moral level; Prince Arthur represents love of God, the soul of all virtues at the spiritual level. The triumph of the spirit is shown as the ultimate end of each adventure and of the epic as a whole.

The Tamil Tradition

8. Cilappathikāram

The first Tamil epic in thirty cantos by Ilango Adigal (2nd c.A.D.). It deals with the story of Kannaki, the heroine. Kōvalan the son of a wealthy merchant of Pukar, is married to Kannaki, the daughter of another wealthy merchant of the city. After a few years of blissful married life, Kōvalan falls in love with Mādhavi, a dancer and lives with her, deserting his wife. He has a daughter by her, Manimēkalai by name. On a festival day they both go to the beach and enjoy singing in turns. As misfortune would have it, Kōvalan misinterprets her song as though she were in love with someone else and leaves her abruptly for his home. Kannaki who has been stoically bearing his desertion receives him with her usual warmth and offers him a pair of anklets thinking that he has come home for want of money. Ashamed of his conduct Kōvalan intends to make good his loss by doing some business with the money to be raised by selling the anklets. When he reveals this plan to his wife and leaves for Madurai, Kannaki simply follows him without a murmur.

On reaching Madurai, Kōvalan approaches a goldsmith and seeks his help to sell an anklet. The goldsmith who had stolen the queen's anklet, a similar one, sees an opportunity to cover his theft and informs the king of recovery of the queen's anklet from a stranger. The king orders, without proper trial, to kill the thief and bring the anklet to him. On hearing the news Kannaki goes to the court and proves to the king that Kōvalan was not the thief but it was the king who has forcibly taken her anklets by killing her husband. Convinced of her proof the king swoons to death. In her fiery frenzy Kannaki burns down the city through the sunclad power of her chastity; leaves the Pandya country; reaches the hilly country of the Chera where she joins her husband, now a celestial who takes her in a celestial car to heavens.

When informed of this strange phenomenon, Senguttuvan the Chera king decides to raise a temple in Kannaki's honour. He goes on an expedition to the North to bring a stone for her statue from the Himalayas; defeats all opposition on the way; brings the consecrated stone to Vanji, his capital where he installs the statue of Kannaki in a newly built temple and celebrates her deification.

Kannaki the chief protagonist of the epic, being a woman, does not resort to physical fortitude to get over her predicament. She wins her case against the king and burns his city only through the spiritual strength begotten of her moral rectitude namely, chastity. By depicting Senguttuvan's feats of warrior heroism as just a means of celebrating Kannaki's moral and spiritual victory, the poet reveals his attitude that martial valour is desirable only if it is employed to serve and uphold moral and spiritual principles. By depicting the goldsmith as a dishonest culprit and by the attributes such as "messenger of Death", "murderous goldsmith", "treacherous person", and so on, the poet discredits his intellectual abilities manifest in his seizing of the opportunity to cover his theft, in his exhaustive knowledge of thievery and in his persuasive powers of rhetoric.

Portrayal of a woman as the "hero" in terms of her moral and spiritual excellence, and depiction of the most powerful monarch as a royal servant of the "hero", illustrate the fact that the very first Tamil epic *Cilappathikāram* has chosen to celebrate moral and spiritual heroism, an interesting contrast to the earliest epics in the European tradition.

9. Manimēkalai

The second Tamil epic in thirty cantos by Seethalaichattanar (circa. 3rd or 6th c. A.D.), deals with the story of Manimēkalai, the daughter of Kōvalan and Mādhavi. Manimēkalai becomes a Buddhist nun at the instance of her mother. The death of her father and the misfortunes of Kannaki had disillusioned her view of Life. Attracted by her beauty and other accomplishments, Udayakumaran, the prince develops a passion for her and one day follows her to a garden. Manimēkalai escapes into a marble room wherefrom the goddess Manimēkalai after whom she was named, spirits her away and leaves her on an island called Manipallavam after investing her with certain magical powers. There in Manipallavam she receives a divine bowl which, if first filled with food by a chaste lady would never become empty, no matter how many millions are fed with it and how long. Back in her town, Manimēkalai gets the bowl filled with by Athirai, a chaste lady and goes on feeding the poor, the handicapped and the needy. Seeking permission from the king, she visits the prison and feeds the criminals. Thus her name spreads far and wide as one who brings food and succour to one and all.

When again pursued by the lascivious prince, Manimēkalai assumes the shape of Kāyachandikai a wellknown woman of the day, whose husband chancing to see the prince pursuing his wife at night, kills him. Manimēkalai feels sorry for the death of the prince. Her knowledge of her relationship with the prince as her husband in previous births makes her bemoan his illaudable death. Thus there is a struggle within and without her, between her passion for the prince and her spiritual leanings. By the timely counsel from her guardian angel, Manimēkalai successfully resists this temptation from within. The queen-mother tries to avenge her son's death caused by Manimēkalai by getting her shut up in a cell and setting on a ruffian to molest her. Manimēkalai overcomes all such persecutions by virtue of magical powers attained through her guardian angel. At last the queen begs her pardon for her ill-treatment and sets her free. Manimēkalai thereafter goes about learning the philosophy of various religions. She hurries to Kanchi to feed the famine-stricken people and there meets her mother Mādhavi and Aravana Adigal, the celebrated Buddhist saint who teaches her the Buddhist philosophy. Initiated by him, Manimēkalai starts performing *tapas* (penance) to avoid future births.

Like its predecessor, *Manimēkalai* also has no hero ; only heroine. The epic demonstrates that sainthood is the ideal form of the heroic provided it serves humanity in its concrete form. While *Cilappatikāram* glorifies the virtue of chastity, *Manimēkalai* heroizes the virtue of charity, both at moral and spiritual levels.

10. Jeevakacinthāmani

The most celebrated of the Jain epics in Tamil in thirteen cantos by Thiruthakka Thēvar (10th c.A.D.) ; it deals with the story of Jeevaka, the prince. Kattiyankāran the minister has deprived Jeevaka of his kingdom by treacherously killing his father, the king. He is brought up by a merchant who provides him with necessary training in kingship and other arts and sciences, and advises him to remain in cognito until propitious time to redeem his kingdom. Meanwhile Jeevaka visits several parts of his country and marries as many as eight ladies in virtue of his skill in several arts. Finally at the instance of his mother, Jeevaka meets his uncle Govindan who devises a ruse through which Kattiyankāran is invited to a wedding contest and killed. Restored to his throne, Jeevaka rules over his kingdom for sometime and thereafter he is advised by his mother to renounce the world in preference to the welfare of the soul. King Jeevaka leaves the throne to his son and after due penance attains nirvana, the ultimate blissful state.

Jeevakacinthāmani is the first major epic in Tamil which depicts a male hero in the personage of Jeevaka. Similarly this is the first epic that chooses a royal personage as its hero. In spite of the several battles described in the course of the epic action, and in spite of the hero being portrayed as an excellent archer, *Cinthāmani* does not advocate battle prowess as its heroic ideal. The poet, through the example of his hero, Jeevaka, represents rather a life of virtuous living to which one's mastery in martial skills and proficiency in arts and sciences are made subservient. Strangely enough, *Cinthāmani* is the first Tamil epic which depicts its hero as resorting to strategies to win his goal. *Cinthāmani* exemplifies the view, therefore, that whether one's physical fortitude or powers of the intellect, it is good if put to defend or uphold virtue, and condemnable if directed towards evil ends.

WORKS OF MILTON (1608 — 1674 A.D.)

11. *Comus*

A masque by Milton written to celebrate the earl of Bridgewater's entry on the presidency of Wales. A dramatic poem in the Elizabethan masque tradition, *Comus* deals with the theme of glorification of chastity. Comus is a pagan God invented by Milton. Son of Bacchus and Circe, Comus waylays travellers and tempts them to drink a magic liquor which changes their countenances into the faces of wild beasts. A lady and her two brothers are overtaken by darkness in a forest. The lady separated from her companions, and attracted by the revelry of Comus and his rout, comes upon Comus who in the guise of a shepherd, offers to lodge her in his cottage, and leads her off. The brothers appear and are told what has happened by the good Attendant Spirit, who has taken the form of the shepherd Thyrsis. He warns them of the magic power of Comus and gives them the root of the plant Haemony as a protection. The scene changes, and Comus, with his rabble round him, is discovered pressing the lady to drink from a glass, while she, strong in her purity resists his enticements. The brothers burst in and disperse the crew. Unfortunately they have not secured the wand of Comus, and are unable to release the lady from the enchanted chair in which she sits. Thyrsis thereupon invokes Sabrina, Goddess of the neighbouring river Severn, who comes attended by waternymphs, and frees the lady.

12. *Paradise Lost*

The greatest epic in English by John Milton originally contained ten Books. It was subsequently rearranged by the poet himself into the present form of twelve Books when it was first printed in 1667. The argument of the epic is as follows :

Book I After the invocatory passage, the epic action begins with Satan who is lying on the burning lake of fire in hell along with his followers after their overthrow from heaven. Satan recovers

first. He awakens his legions, comforts them and summons a council. Pandemonium, a vast palace of Satan is built. In this council-chamber is held a council of the fallen angels.

II Satan begins the debate by inviting their counsels. Moloch proposes open war for the recovery of heaven ; Belial advocates ease and comfort, while Mammon advises starting their new life in hell itself instead of hazarding a war again. Beelzebub endorses Satan's view of examining the possibilities of seducing Man — heaven's new creation — and winning him to their side by fraud as a surer form of revenge against God. Since no one volunteers to do this, Satan himself undertakes the journey. He reaches Hell-gates, is suffered to pass by Sin and Death, voyages through Chaos and at last comes within the sight of the universe. Then he is seen directing his course towards the (new) world.

III God sees Satan flying towards the world ; tells the Son, of Satan's aim and his success and consequently the fall and punishment of Man unless the latter finds a Redeemer. The Son 'offers himself a ransom for man', is accepted and exalted. Meanwhile Satan reaches the outer surface of the world, descends to the Sun, is guided by Uriel to the earth and alights on Mt. Niphates.

IV In the Garden of Eden, Satan sees Adam and Eve enraptured in their prelapsarian bliss, overhears their talk regarding the forbidden tree of knowledge and decides to found his enterprise upon this. At nightfall he tries to tempt Eve in a dream, but before he could accomplish his task, he is discovered by Gabriel and Ithuriel and made to flee from the garden.

V Eve relates her disquieting dream to Adam. Raphael sent by God, comes to the garden and warns Adam of the impending danger and its consequence if he disobeyed God's command. At Adam's request Raphael narrates how and why Satan incited the angels to revolt against God in heaven.

VI Continuing his narration Raphael describes the three-days war in heaven at the end of which Satan and his followers were driven out of heaven and cast into hell by the Son. Raphael repeats his warning to Adam.

VII Raphael describes to Adam how thereafter God decided on the creation of another world and the race of man to inhabit the same, and sent his Son to perform the creation in six days.

VIII Raphael answers ambiguously the enquiries of Adam regarding the motion of heavenly bodies. Adam relates what he remembers since his creation such as his talk with God, God's prohibition and his meeting with Eve. Raphael departs, once more warning Adam.

IX Eve persists in gardening alone; Adam yields. Satan in the form of a serpent finds Eve alone and persuades her to eat the forbidden fruit. Eve succumbs to the temptation and wishes Adam also to do so. Adam knowing that she is lost and that he could not live without her, eats of the fruit. Robbed of their innocence, they are filled with a sense of sin and shame.

X God sends his Son to judge Adam and Eve and to pronounce their doom. Satan returns to hell and relates his success, but finds himself and his followers transformed into serpents, Sin and Death come to this world. God foretells their ultimate overthrow by the Son. Adam and Eve approach the Son of God with repentance and supplication.

XI Then Son intercedes for Adam and Eve. God sends Michael to Adam to reveal to him the future and his redemption. Michael tells Adam and Eve of their banishment. He takes Adam to a high hill and shows him in a series of vision the future misery of man till the Flood.

XII Then Michael traces the history of Israel after the Flood till the coming of the Messiah with the subsequent progress of Christianity, and foretells the state of the church till his Second coming. Descending the hill the angel leads Adam and Eve out of Paradise. Sad but consoled with the hope of final redemption, Adam and Eve walk hand in hand into the world that lies before them.

13. Paradise Regained

An epic poem in four Books by Milton. Its theme is Satan's temptation of Christ in the wilderness. As such, it is a sequel to *Paradise Lost* in that whereas Paradise was lost by the yielding of Adam and Eve to Satan's temptation, it was regained by the Son's resistance to the temptations of the same Satan.

Book I relates the baptism of Christ by John, and the proclamation from Heaven that he is the Son of God. Satan alarmed, summons a council of his peers, and undertakes his temptation. Christ is led into the wilderness prompted by some "strong motion" within him. Satan in the guise of an aged man in rural weeds approaches him and suggests that he, being hungry, should prove his divine character by turning the stones around him into bread. Christ seeing through his guile sternly refuses. Books II and III describe how Satan once more tries the hunger temptation, placing before Christ a "table richly spread" which is contemptuously rejected by the Son. He then makes appeal to the higher appetites for wealth and power, and a disputation follows as to the real value of earthly glory. Satan, confuted, next reminds Christ that the kingdom of David is now under the Roman yoke, and suggests that he should free it. He takes Christ to a high mountain and shows him the kingdom of the earth. A description follows of the contemporary state of the eastern world, divided between the powers of Rome and of the Parthians, as seen in this vision. Satan offers an alliance with, or conquest of the Parthians, and the liberation of Jews, then in captivity.

In Book IV Christ, remaining unmoved by Satan's 'Political maxims', the tempter, turning to the western side draws his attention to Rome and proposes the expulsion of the wicked emperor Tiberius; and finally pointing out Athens, urges the attractions of her poets, orators, and philosophers. All these failing, Satan brings Christ back to the wilderness. On the third morning, confessing Christ proof against all temptation, Satan carries him to the highest pinnacle of the temple and bids him cast himself down 'to know what more he is than man', only to receive the well-known answer, "Tempt not the Lord thy God, he said and stood."

Satan falls dismayed and angels bear Christ away hailing him as the Queller of Satan. Christ however, returns unobserved, alone to his mother's house.

14. Samson Agonistes*

The finest English tragedy by Milton modelled in form on Greek tragedies. It deals with the last phase of the life of the Samson of the Book of Judges when he is a prisoner of the Philistines. Samson's moral recovery is the theme of the play. It opens with Samson already blind and a prisoner of the Philistines. The action is simply a series of confrontations between Samson and his various visitors. First he is visited by the Chorus of certain friends and equals of his tribe who try to comfort him. Next he is visited by his father Manoa who tells him that he would procure his liberty by ransom ; then by his treacherous wife Dalila who argues that she delivered Samson to the Philistines not to be hurt and imprisoned but to be delivered back to her shorn of his hair and supernatural strength as her love's prisoner. Then the Philistine champion Hapha comes to taunt Samson and exult over him. Samson replies with calmness and dignity, a sign of his progress towards moral recovery. Finally a Philistine officer enters to summon Samson to come before the Philistine lords at their pagan feast. Though first contemptuously declines to obey, Samson, feeling "some rousing motions" in him suggesting that it was from God, goes along with the officer when he comes the second time. Thus the series of actions gradually unfold Samson's state of mind turning from near-despair to resignation to God's will for him. Acting under divine inspiration he pulls down the temple where the feast is held and destroys the audience and himself. Whereas the visitors symbolize several aspects of temptation which Samson successfully resists, his final acceptance of the Philistine's summon signifies his ripeness and readiness to actualize the truth, "in His will is our peace."

* Outlines of the epics: consulted *Oxford and Longman Companions*.

15. Kambarāmaṇyam

The greatest of Tamil epic poems in six Books running to about 42,000 lines, by Kamban (9th c. A.D.), the greatest of Tamil narrative poets. It purports to represent Rama the hero more as an ideal man committed to defend *Aram* (*Dharma*) than as an *Avatar* just exemplifying divine powers. Though he draws the basic outline of the story from the epic of Valmiki, Kamban's is not a translation nor even an adaptation of the Sanskrit original.

Book I

Dasaratha the king of Kosala, is blessed with the birth of four sons through his three wives Kausalya, Kaikēyi and Sumitra. The boys Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana and Satrugna grow up into well-accomplished princes. Viswamitra a sage renowned for his tapas visits one day Dasaratha to seek the help of Rama to contain the Rakshasas who frequently disturb his sacrificial rites. Rama followed by Lakshmana accompanies the sage and kills Thadaka, a powerful Rakshasa woman. Blessing Rama with divine weapons, Viswamitra takes them to the court of Janaka where Rama marries Sita after breaking the mighty bow of Siva, as a wedding contest. On his way back to Kosala, Rama disarms Parasurama's pride who challenges him to prove his strength by drawing his bow.

Book II

Dasaratha's royal decision of crowning Rama as the king-designate is discomfited by his second wife Kaikēyi who, tempted by her nurse Mandhara, wrests orders from Dasaratha to crown her son Bharata as the king-designate and to send Rama in exile to the forests for fourteen years. Quite undismayed, Rama very happily takes his orders from Kaikēyi and leaves Ayodhya accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana. King Dasaratha dies heart-broken when informed that Rama has left the kingdom. At the point of death he disowns Kaikēyi and Bharata and forbids the latter from performing his funeral rites. On return from his grandfather's home, Bharata is shocked to know of his mother's role in bringing about the sad events and soon sets out to the forest to bring Rama back to Ayodhya. Guha, the hunter's chief meets Rama and is so charmed by Rama's person and qualities that he offers himself as a guide

to accompany him in his exile. Overwhelmed by his selfless love, Rama comforts him by including him in his brotherhood, and thereafter crosses the Ganges with his help. Staying back in his country as desired by Rama, Guha meets Bharata with initial suspicion of his motives. On hearing that Bharata has come to fetch Rama back to rule over Ayodhya, Guha realizes the selfless devotion of Bharata, helps him cross the river and directs him to the abode of Rama. This meeting of Guha and Bharata is one of the most moving passages of the epic. Refusing to return to Ayodhya before the stipulated period, Rama consoles Bharata by agreeing to give him his sandals as a regent of which he would rule over the kingdom until his return.

Book III

Rama meets during his sojourn in the forests of Dhanda-karanya the sage Agastya who blesses him with divine weapons and victory in his expeditions against the evil. Rama's serene and sylvan stay in Panchavati is disturbed by the entry of Surpanaka who in her frantic passion for Rama attempts to remove Sita and thereby gets disfigured by Lakshmana. Burning with humiliation, Surpanaka meets her brother Ravana and complains that she was thus humiliated while trying to kidnap Sita to be his most beautiful paramour. Tempted thus, Ravana devises a strategy by which Marisa in the form of a golden deer draws the attention of Sita, at whose instance Rama chases the deer far into the forest and kills it when it dodges him further. Meanwhile, Ravana, disguised as a holy man, goes to the cottage and carries away Sita in his aerial car, fatally wounding Jatāyu who opposes him. Deeply upset, Rama and Lakshmana set out towards the forests of Kishkindha in quest of Sita.

Book IV

Hanuman, the minister to Sugriva, the deposed ruler of Kishkindha meets Rama on his way and learns of his mission in life — to defend the virtuous and destroy the evil — and of his present misery. He introduces Sugriva to them as one who has been deprived of his kingdom and wife by his brother Vāli in virtue of the latter's invincible might and strength. Sympathizing with Sugriva's misfortunes, partially similar to his, Rama promises to redeem his

wife and kingdom by killing Vāli. Encouraged thus, Sugriva challenges his brother to a single combat and while they are engaged, Vāli is killed by Rama. Though he explains to some extent why he killed Vāli unprovoked, Rama does not answer Vāli's question, "Why did you choose to kill me from a hiding place?" Rama crowns Sugriva as the king of Kishkindha and includes him also into his brotherhood. Sugriva sends messengers into all directions in quest of Sita. Hanuman is sent towards the south in the direction of Lanka.

Book V

Hanuman having reached up to the southernmost part of the land with no success, assumes his macroform and, flying over the sea, lands on Lanka. Wonderstruck with the grandeur of the metropolis of Ravana, Hanuman combs the town and its suburbs and finds at last to his rapture Sita resisting the implorings of Ravana in a grove guarded by Rakshasa women. On his exit, Hanuman appears before Sita, reveals his identity by giving her Rama's ring, and comforts her that Rama with the help of *vānara* army would soon release her from Ravana. Highly exhilarated, Sita sends through him a jewel in token of her identity to Rama. In his anguish over the state of Sita in captivity, Hanuman destroys the grove and all those who oppose him until Indrajit captures him by using the *Brahmastra* a divine weapon. Presented before Ravana, and asked to explain his acts of violence, Hanuman tells them about his mission, at which the enraged Ravana orders to punish him by setting fire to his tail. Soaring aloft in the sky, Hanuman causes further damage by wielding his fiery tail over the houses of Lanka and flies back to Rama with the glad news of finding Sita in Lanka in all misery and yet unassailed and undefiled in her virtue.

Book VI

While Rama is in deep deliberation as to how to take the whole army of the *vānaras* across the sea, Ravana consults his ministers and army chiefs as to how to contain the enemy. Vibhishna advises compromise by releasing Sita while others advocate war. Ravana banishes Vibhishna for his bias towards Rama's cause. Vibhishna approaches Rama and is accepted by him as a virtuous friend and taken into Rama's brotherhood. Rama causes a bridge to be built

across the sea and reaches the shores of Lanka. Failing in his efforts through ambassadors to redeem Sita without bloodshed, Rama declares war against Ravana. Stripped of his crowns, weapons and valour too, Ravana is allowed by Rama to go back and return fully equipped the next day — an act of unparalleled charity in the history of epic heroism. When Kumbhakarna reaches the battlefield, Rama who has heard about his virtuous disposition sends Vibhishna to convince him to join them rather than die for an unjust and unworthy cause. Though happy about Vibhishna's alliance with Rama whose cause he considers virtuous, Kumbhakarna refuses the offer in that he does not think it virtuous to desert a brother caught in such a dire situation — one of the moving passages in the epic in terms of the emotional labyrinth painted in immortal poetry. He fights valiantly and dies a death of honour at the hands of Rama who kills him reluctantly.

Meanwhile Ravana tries in vain to dishearten Sita by presenting to her a false Janaka who implores her to accede to Ravana lest he should be killed for her stubbornness. News of Kumbhakarna's death disenchant Sita while it stuns Ravana. Indrajit goes in turn to the battlefield and puts Lakshmana and all others except Rama to an enchanted death by employing the divine weapons, *nagapasa* and *Brahmastra*. Rama swoons over the apparent death of Lakshmana. Hanuman in virtue of his being Chiranjeevi (ever-living) escapes the effects of the *astras* and revives all others by fetching a life-infusing herb, called sanjeevi.

Surprised at the revival of the enemy's army, Indrajit advises his father Ravana to release Sita so that the remaining members of his race may live longer. Scolded by his father for his advice, Indrajit goes to the war and is killed by Lakshmana. Enraged more than engulfed in distress at the death of his son, Ravana meets Rama in the battlefield and in spite of his indomitable courage and invincible valour, he is killed by Rama who is all praise for Ravana's martial prowess. After crowning Vibhishna as the king of Lanka and allowing Sita to join him after a ritual of purification, Rama reaches Ayodhya accompanied by all the members of his brotherhood and accepts the burden of ruling over the kingdom of Ayodhya.

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ABOUT THIS STUDY

The conclusion of Dr. Manavalan objectively arrived at from this study of Milton and Kamban is that neither the exhibition of martial prowess or physical valour prompted or propelled by 'immortal hate', nor the best-planned stratagem or clever and intelligent manoeuvres and manipulations to vanquish an opponent can be recognised as heroism; the voluntary and willing suffering patiently undergone, actuated by love, eternal and infinite, towards others alone deserves to be characterised as an ideal form of heroism; even martial prowess, physical valour, and intelligent planning and strategy can become loftier heroism if they are directed towards and aimed at achieving moral and spiritual ends... The work of Dr. Manavalan is an outstanding one, characterised by wide reading, deep erudition, sound scholarship, clear analysis, incisive criticism and lucidity of language. To read the book is a rich and rewarding experience.

Justice M. M. ISMAIL

To compare Kamban and Milton and to show that in their concept of heroism and 'in their vision of Life' they are alike, may sound a little odd. But Dr. Manavalan has gone through this process of comparative study thoroughly, meticulously and sincerely. He also feels that these two poets are relevant to 'this world of today' because the message these two poets give has an immediacy and a universality of its own... Dr. Manavalan has done a good job in giving a penetrating study of the epics of Kamban and Milton purely from the angle of heroism. Dr. Manavalan's book is based on his work for the Doctorate degree and it is a fruitful study in the realm of cross cultural assimilation so much in vogue now in literary criticism.

Prof. M. V. RAMA SARMA